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# THE GREAT SOUTH LAND

THE RIVER PLATE AND  
SOUTHERN BRAZIL OF TO-DAY

BY

W. H. KOEBEL



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# THE GREAT SOUTH LAND

## THE RIVER PLATE AND SOUTHERN BRAZIL OF TO-DAY

### PART I

#### CHAPTER I

##### INTRODUCTORY

EVERYONE is familiar with the story of the ugly duckling which turned out a swan. One is tempted to use the simile with regard to the Republics of the Rio de la Plata. But it would not apply entirely. The cygnet made an unbroken progress towards its full swan beauty. The River Plate Republics have attained to their present condition by a far more mottled growth. Sometimes just when their political and commercial feathers seemed about to shine in a brilliant zenith the countries that bore them have taken to a fit of moulting, and have brooded, bald and bare, for a period of seeming hopelessness.

But in the end the process in the case of the Republics has produced results that were at all events similar up to a certain point. The intervals of depression have tended steadily to become more fleeting and to occur at longer intervals. Moreover, the ratio of progress has increased in a manner

that has even now not become clear to the majority of those who live outside their interesting frontiers. No more than twenty years or so ago South America as a whole was regarded in England as a continent that seldom troubled to pause in its oscillations between grim tragedy and grotesque humour. It was the fashion then to regard almost every South American president as half bandit, half oppressor, who maintained his fingers in his country's exchequer, an ear well tuned for the first whisper of the final danger, and a calculating eye on that distant Paris mansion that stood for the goal of his ultimate and inevitable flight—the safe harbour of ease that crowned a successful career of wholesale assassinations and plunderings !

There have been such men, of course. In certain of the South American States they have existed at an even later period than twenty years ago. Quite a number of precisely similar types are springing up in Central and Eastern Europe to-day—though the haven of their ambitions is anywhere but Paris ! But it is some time since they have been accepted as the model on which the average South American president is moulded. Certainly, as regards the Republics of Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay, quite a different view has been taken of recent years by very many of those who have had first hand dealings with these States. If there has been a tendency on the part of these to find fault at all with these rulers (for such in a sense they still remain), it is rather on the head that they have occupied themselves too whole-heartedly, daringly, and systematically with the industrial and socialistic



problems of the day, and that they have occasionally been inclined to take the side of labour to an extent that has been detrimental to the interests of the foreign capital invested in these countries.

All this, of course, is a matter of opinion. No doubt some of the River Plate statesmen have gone to inconvenient lengths in their attempts to grasp the industrial thistles. But how far they are to be blamed for their actions is again purely a matter of opinion. It would be somewhat rash to blame a person for procedure which one-half of the world considers a fault, the other a merit. It seems quite clear that the progress of these Republics has had the effect of shaking off their traditional local troubles and of saddling them in their place with those of the quite modern world. Legislation concerning the hours of labour and the rates of pay has taken the place of shootings at dawn and throat-cuttings as the blood-red sun sank beneath the muddy waters of the Rio de la Plata. It is true that there have been occasional moments when one of these processes has resulted in the introduction of the other. But this, again, is all in keeping with the affairs of the outer world.

To-day, at all events, the inhabitants of the Rio de la Plata have a rapidly decreasing cause for their old-standing bitterness at the ignorance displayed by the European world concerning their affairs. Not many years ago there were still a certain number of people, sufficiently well educated in other respects, who were given to wonder as to what manner of Indians those were that stalked the streets of Buenos Aires. To-day quite a large proportion of

these same persons are keenly interested in the market price of the shares of such establishments as Harrods, Maple, Mappin and Webb, the tube, and the other commercial enterprises with which the capital of Argentina now abounds. Thus the old-standing Argentine grievance comprised in this accusation of Indian-haunted streets may now definitely be said to have disappeared!

Such knowledge, however, as has been accumulated in England concerning these River Plate States has suffered the fate of much else in the course of the war. It has held good until the time of the outbreak of the hostilities in 1914, and after that, in common with taxi-cab engines and stocks of whisky and butter, it has suffered from an almost complete absence of renewal. The end of the war has left very few countries in the condition in which its beginning found them. As regards the Americas, it is not only the United States which has undergone an epoch-making change in politics, parties, and financial status. The struggle has exercised an influence on the Latin-American Republics, more especially on those of the Rio de la Plata, which is already evident in the affairs of their peoples, and which cannot fail ultimately to affect their relations with Europe, and to enhance their political and commercial influence.

Indeed, a man who had left the Rio de la Plata at the beginning of 1914 would find himself something of a Rip van Winkle were he to return to it now, without having received news from the place in the interval. He would discover a closer and more intelligent interest in the affairs of Europe



than has obtained at any previous period. He would find the echoes of the strong partisanship in connection with the world struggle still rumbling fiercely. He would discover a new spirit of industrial independence which has arisen as a result of the temporary break in communications and the supply of goods from abroad. He would see with some amazement, too, that the North American, whose occupations when he had left him in the Southern Republics in 1914 were largely confined to affairs of beef and transport, was now present in thousands, and was rapidly extending his interests throughout almost every ramification of trade.

He would, of course, notice very much more than this. But these pages are too young to justify an attempt to go into all such details of transformation at this particular stage of the book. In any case, before proceeding further, it is necessary to emphasise one point which is of the greatest importance at this juncture to those interested in the affairs of the southern continent. It cannot be long now before the purely generalising adjective "South American" will have to disappear—that is to say when applied to specific habits and customs. In the past it has been usual to refer to the morality and physical characteristics of the South Americans as though these were identical from Panama to Cape Horn. If we reverse the process, and imagine the South American using the term "European" in the same sense, we should obtain some startling and very disconcerting results to-day.

A rather striking instance of the absurdity of this habit was afforded quite recently in London in

connection with a proposal to found there an institute that should cover the affairs of all the South American Republics. The Minister Plenipotentiary of one of these latter protested with some eloquence against what he urged was too comprehensive a scheme.

“Would it flatter your vanity,” he asked, “if a corresponding European institution were founded in my country, to share the same roof with the nations of Central and Eastern Europe, and to have your ethics thoroughly confused in the minds of strangers with those of a dozen or two of other peoples?”

From the point of view of national vanity alone it seemed a sufficiently telling argument against any such slipshod methods. And in this respect it must not be forgotten that the national sentiment of the progressive Republics of South America is now very strongly developed. In these countries it is the policy of the educational authorities to inculcate patriotism in the schools, and no pains are spared in this respect. In every scholastic institution the youngsters of both sexes are taught to pay an intense honour to the flag and to thrill with devotion at the sound of the national anthem. This training, added to the naturally enthusiastic temperament of the average Latin-American—for in this particular respect one may generalise with some safety—has already produced a marked effect on the spirit of the various inhabitants. It is true that the average inhabitant of one of the progressive States is strongly imbued with the temperament of a politician; but this does not necessarily interfere



in the least with his broader sense of patriotism. Thus, although he may hold no official position, he will go out of his way, even at great personal inconvenience, to show you the buildings and parks of his town, the soldiers of his Republic, the ships of his fleet, and the general institutions of his country, with the enthusiastic ardour of one who feels that he has a personal responsibility in the State.

The existence, too, of certain international jealousies—which in one or two instances have in the past closely approached a state of feud—makes the South American doubly keen to be acknowledged as the citizen of his own especial Republic, and not as a vague dweller in a continent—and this quite apart from the natural reluctance of a possible magnate, whose mansion has been designed in Paris, and who pays some tens of thousands of pounds for a race-horse, to be confused with another, perhaps also quite an important person in his way, who lives in a mud dwelling with a few oriental glass balls for decoration, and who feeds with his family and retainers from a common dish into which each dips his fork or his fingers.

I make no apologies for dilating at such length upon this topic, for it has now an importance which it has never previously possessed. In the course of the war the various national sentiments of these Republics have expressed themselves very strongly, but by no means unanimously, as regards the part that the respective States of the southern New World should play in the struggle. Some have openly joined in the struggle on the side of the Allies; others have contented themselves with a

benevolent neutrality, while one or two have been suspected of harbouring parties with strong pro-German leanings. So far as the River Plate Republics are concerned, I will endeavour to show the policy of each in this book. In any case, the part played by each in the war cannot fail to have a profound influence on its present-day sympathies and situation, and must be taken into consideration when dealing with the problems of its immediate future.

Apart from such questions as these, there is no doubt that the shifting sands of international politics and the racing centres of power have left these South American States in an economic position stronger than any which they have previously enjoyed. What they will make of their opportunities is surely one of the most interesting political and commercial studies of to-day. They had begun to interest Europe and the United States very closely before the war. They must do so still more acutely to-day.

It is undoubtedly owing to the circumstances that I have described that very few writers have taken the trouble to point out the relations which the various South American States bear to each other. They are still apt to be regarded as vague and somewhat undistinguishable parts of a great whole. Nevertheless, in order to understand the present situation of the south-eastern Republics of the Latin continent, it is absolutely necessary to glean some idea of the influences which have been at work between Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Southern Brazil. Therefore an attempt at a thumbnail sketch of these must precede all else.



Briefly, then, the people of Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay (excluding, of course, the Indian elements, rare in the first two, but preponderating in the third) hail from the same stock. These were Spaniards who, from 1520 onwards, came out in search of a few tons of precious minerals, and found instead league upon league of valuable raw earth, though it cost some centuries and many calamitous and fruitless expeditions to realise where the true source of their wealth lay.

For almost three centuries the three countries formed part of the same Viceroyalty, and it was not until 1810, on the first attempt at the establishment of Republics independent of the Spanish rule, that their separation was brought about. Argentina was the first to take up the cause of liberation, thus becoming involved in a collision with Paraguay, the latter State not finding herself yet prepared for the change. This, however, was of short duration, and the Spanish power having been driven from Uruguay in 1814, the three former colonies rapidly assumed the onus of self-government.

Previous to the era of independence there had occurred a long series of wars between the Spaniards of the River Plate and the Portuguese of Brazil, the country in dispute being the present Republic of Uruguay, bordering Brazil on the south. There had been rival claims to this rich stretch of land from the date of its first discovery, probably by the Portuguese, and further international difficulties were brought about by the establishment of the great Jesuit Indian missions both in Uruguay and Paraguay, which brought about a dislocation

in the affairs of the slave markets of São Paulo that the inhabitants of this latter State endeavoured to rectify by force of arms. This intermittent state of warfare continued for some time after the establishment of the Republics. But it then took a different form. No further question of colonies was involved, for Brazil was now an Empire, with a policy of her own independent of that of Portugal. It was no longer a question of rivalry between Spaniards and Portuguese, but of the varying interests of a group of neighbouring States.

It might have been supposed that the three Spanish-speaking Republics, having once formed part of the same Viceroyalty, would have clung together in opposition to the Brazilians. But this sentiment of the past held good only in a very minor degree, owing chiefly to the strong national characteristics which were rapidly being developed by the new States, and also the circumstance that the very large proportion of Guaraní Indians in the population of Paraguay went to neutralise the remnants of anything of this kind so far as that country was concerned. Indeed, how little this obtained was instanced in 1851, when Brazil, Uruguay, and the present Argentine province of Entre Rios leagued themselves together to destroy the power of the Argentine tyrant Rosas.

Until past the middle of the nineteenth century, moreover, both Brazil and Argentina took an active part in the numerous Uruguayan revolutions in the hope of obtaining a predominant influence over that small Republic. But in 1864 the international politics assumed a new phase. Then, Argentina,



Brazil, and Uruguay allied themselves against the danger threatened by Lopez, the warlike dictator of Paraguay. The long and fierce war, which did not terminate in the defeat of the Paraguayans until 1870, was the last from which these States were destined to suffer, if a certain amount of civil disturbances, principally in Paraguay and Uruguay, be left out of account.

In the meantime each of these States, all four, of course, being now Republics, has gone its own way. Each now possesses its own individuality, its own ideals, and its own national heroes—although these latter are by no means invariably regarded as heroic by the people of the neighbouring countries! Of the four countries, Argentina and Brazil naturally play the chief parts, and it is not to be denied that until recently there has remained a certain tendency on the part of each to secure the chief interest—although in a far less direct manner than was formerly the case—in the lesser Republics of Uruguay and Paraguay. For all that, the events of recent years have made it clear that both of these important Republics have maintained a most reasonable attitude, and there seems no reason whatever why this should not be indefinitely prolonged.

The attitude of the four States towards the combatants in the great war was instructive. It is a curious circumstance, but a coincidence with little actual meaning in itself, that the nearer the State lay to Europe, the more ardent were its sympathies with the Allies. That is to say, Brazil, the most adjacent Republic, not only declared war

on Germany, but sent forces to Europe; Uruguay, the next in order of propinquity, broke off relations, and declared herself uncompromisingly on the side of the Entente. Argentina, a little more remote, preserved an official neutrality that was largely counteracted by the friendly attitude of the people, while Paraguay, situated at the furthest distance from Europe of the four, maintained an official neutrality too, but in her case the good will of the people was not so ardently pronounced, although the Republic held many good friends of the Allies.

Before concluding this chapter, it would be as well to point to one of those numerous factors which widely distinguish the history of Brazil from that of the River Plate Republics. The affairs of the former during the nineteenth century have been strangely tranquil when compared with those of the latter. Brazil glided into her state of independence with very little disturbance to her social and economical situation, knowing practically nothing of the volcanic explosion and its half-century of aftermath that marked the separation of the Spanish-speaking colonies from Spain.

The changes in Brazil's status from colony to kingdom, from kingdom to Empire, and from Empire to Republic, took place with a laudably small amount of bloodshed, and, indeed, the last transformation, which did not occur until as late as 1889, was accompanied by no more than a single casualty, a wounded Minister of Marine. Thus the great Republic, although it has by no means been free from civil war, has never suffered from that condition of utter chaos which marked the entire

first half of the nineteenth century in the case of the neighbouring States. And this, of course, has been to the very great advantage of the country.

Here, too, is a difference of quite another kind between the Republics of the River Plate and Brazil which has not been generally remarked. This is not strange, since it is by no means an intrinsically important circumstance. The emblem of the River Plate Republics, which they share in common with most of the Spanish-speaking Republics, is the risen sun.

Brazil lacks this, and the reason is not far to seek. The design of the sun was taken from the ancient Incas, worshippers of the orb and founders of one of the strangest semi-socialistic, semi-tyrannical States that have ever existed, and with these neither the Brazilian Indians nor their Portuguese successors had any concern. Nor, for the matter of that, had the inhabitants of Uruguay, nor of nine-tenths of Argentina. But, seeing that the central point of the old Inca power became the headquarters of the early Spanish colonisation, the knowledge of the emblem spread from one province to another practically throughout the Spanish-speaking regions of the continent, and when the young Republics were founded they adopted this as a sign of their claim to a distinct South American nationality, or, rather, race.

In the course of time this almost ubiquitous emblem has grown to assume another significance in the public mind. It has come to be regarded as a symbol of the full birth of new nations, and the sign of a progress and warmth of civilisation that



beats down alike upon the human heart and the soil of the earth, drawing upwards the best there is in both. It is a pretty conceit, and in this Brazil may legitimately share, though she lacks the golden emblem itself.

## CHAPTER II

### BUENOS AIRES OF YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

HE who went to South America in 1918 travelled by a somewhat devious course. The famous "A" steamers of the R.M.S.P. were off the route. Some were trooping, others serving as hospital ships, while one or two, having perished gallantly, lay beneath the waves. Such vessels as remained to deal with the South American trade were of the plainer type, sound and fine vessels for all that, which steamed their way across a strangely solitary ocean, knowing nothing of the luxury of evening deck lights, and hung about by all the other precautions demanded by a state of war with an unscrupulous enemy.

Perhaps it was a somewhat undignified and annoying species of progress for a vessel of a nation that did actually rule the surface of the waves, whatever might be lurking in the depths beneath them. But it was a very small matter when compared with the real suffering and hardships that the struggle was entailing elsewhere. And all the time, although the Marconi apparatus sent out its cracklings only at the rarest intervals, one felt the protection of the British fleet, invisible though its vessels remained almost throughout. But not altogether so.

Once off the South American coast, there was evidence in plenty both of the British cruisers and those of the United States. Never was the sea-power of Great Britain more eloquently expressed than by the presence of the grey vessels flying the White Ensign in the far waters, as well as in almost every other part of the globe, when all the time her other, and greater, fleets more than sufficed to maintain the strangle-hold upon the German navy in the North Sea.

They lent a homelike appearance to the Bay of Rio de Janeiro, where the protective boom across the mouth of the harbour gave one a further reminder that this far Republic, too, was at war. The allied soil itself of Brazil strengthened this impression. British naval uniforms were gratifyingly common sights in the streets of Rio, and even the khaki of the land forces was by no means absent from the fine thoroughfares of one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

Indeed, one of the most striking pieces of evidence of the British Marine adaptability might be seen at Rio. There, in the British naval attaché's office, was a marine orderly speaking through the telephone in fluent Portuguese! Not an affair which will go down to history, this—but very eloquent, and comforting all the same!

Steaming southwards, by the side of the coastal ranges that gradually diminished in height, one felt certain of meeting with a cordial atmosphere in Uruguay. And its capital of Montevideo, guarding the northern bank of the great estuary of the Rio de la Plata, more than justified the hopes in this respect.



There remained Argentina, for Buenos Aires was the final port of call of this particular part of the journeyings. Anticipations here were naturally far less confident. In fact, there had been many actual doubts concerning Argentina. That country, of course, had maintained its neutrality—than which there is no more elastic term of speech. If one boy hands stones to a second to throw at a third, he is, I suppose, a neutral—or he would be were he an adult or a nation.

In any case, it was known that the Germans had spared no efforts in Argentina. There had been vague tales of curious happenings and some suspicions of hostile intrigue. It had been thought in many quarters that the Allies and the Central European Powers were running a neck and neck race there, and that the issue of the struggle for influence was still undecided.

It was certain that the official attitude of the Republic had been sphinx-like—perhaps a not altogether unreasonable attitude on the part of a neutral. Only a few weeks before a distinguished British mission had been received with every courtesy, but with an apparent lack of enthusiasm, as expressed officially, that was only counteracted by the tactful procedure of its members and of the British Legation; while an Italian mission, contemplating a visit to Buenos Aires, was at that very moment receiving a lack of encouragement sufficiently marked as in the end to result in the exclusion of Argentina from its itinerary. This, perhaps, was the most surprising of all the incidents of the kind, in view of the fact that almost half

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the population of Buenos Aires is of Italian nationality.

It was not surprising, therefore, if in the eyes of the outer world the sentiments of Argentina seemed dubious. On arrival at Buenos Aires there were all the evidences of complete neutrality. No boom lay across the harbour such as protected the entrance to Rio de Janeiro; no fussing tugs came to guide the big ship along the safe channels, and the passenger suffered from no other formalities than the ordinary ones of peace time either on board or at the docks.

In fact, the atmosphere of the place seemed unchanged. The car that drove one from the docks to the hotel appeared rather above the average. The hotel itself was crowded, and an orchestra was performing there of an even more impressive order than those to which the patrons of that expensive establishment had long been accustomed. An abundant company of waiters flitted to and fro between the various knots of Argentine magnates and foreigners. Probably the most famous Russian dancer in the world was the centre of a group in one corner, while a distinguished pianist held a lesser court near by.

It soon became clear that there was an abundance of everything connected with the more intimate creature comforts. There were no gaps in the wine list. Meat, fowl, and fish were treated as casually as though they might have been the bodies of quite everyday creatures—with a total want of precaution and reverence, indeed, that would have shocked London and Paris to their then frugal cores. It was as though the world had turned back some

three years on its axis. Once settled in that hotel, one felt inclined to draw a long breath, half of relief and half of dismay, and to say to oneself: "Here, at least, there is no war."

And then, on the very first day, sounded the loud strains of music outside. There, crossing the Plaza San Martin, was an immense and apparently interminable procession, bearing sheaf upon sheaf of the Allied flags, accompanied by an astonishing number of bands—bands of varied uniforms, size, and power, but all blowing out the same melody, the "Marseillaise," while the great throng of spectators mingled their enthusiastic cheers with its notes.

That very evening, too, came the news of an Allied success, one of the first that began to break the clouds of an anxious time. Again there was cheering in the street, and the faces of all, whether South Americans or foreigners, widened into broad smiles. It was already becoming evident that things here were not altogether what they seemed to the outside world.

The next evening was given a performance of that moving French war play, "Un Soir au Front." It was a neutral audience that filled one of the principal theatres of the Argentine capital—neutral, that is to say, from the point of view of its nationality. Beyond the necessary tribute to some admirable acting it should have remained apathetic and unbiassed. Nothing was further from its spirit. There was scarcely a moment in the play devoid of a surge of sympathy on the part of the spectators. The most telling passages sent whole rows of men



with a bound to their legs, to make a little bristling forest of outstretched arms and clenched fists. Then would come sharp volleys of shouts, *Abajo los Alemanes!* (Down with the Germans!), in pure Spanish, or, *Conspuez les sâles Boches!* in French that had a tinge of Southern accent.

It seemed a curious neutrality, this; a strange and violent way of expressing indifference! Even a dozen conversations with Argentines did not assist to clear up the matter. Quite the contrary. Whatever chanced to be their rank and profession, they one and all showed themselves uncompromising and ardent adherents to the Allied cause. Without exception, moreover, they vowed that the cause of liberty never could, would, or should be defeated. There was no mere politeness in this, moreover. When an Argentine is loth to differ from one who desires to argue with him, he will shrug his shoulders, smile, and admit that *puede ser* (it may be so), after which he will continue to listen with complete courtesy, but also with a complete absence of any change in his own opinion. But this was not so here.

Theirs was the speaking part on this occasion, and it was one's own lot to listen to the sentiments that one longed to be able to express as well as they did in their sonorous language.

These, of course, were mere first impressions—not always so valueless as they are occasionally made out. That there was another side to this pleasant picture was only too certain. But this was not destined to reveal itself all at once, and in any case, when it did, it seemed to be curiously little con-

cerned either with the generality of the populace or with the leaders of society.

Before proceeding further, however, with these conditions as they recently found themselves in Buenos Aires, it would be as well to take a more comprehensive survey of the affairs of the River Plate Republics in general at this period, since it is not alone with the capital of Argentina that we are concerned. Indeed, it might not be easy to get the true perspective of the position of this most important city without first obtaining some slight idea of the recent social development of its own country and of the two others which are also connected with the great river system.

In this respect Argentina has set the fastest pace; Uruguay, although that State remained in a comparatively backward condition for many generations, has now made up a surprising amount of leeway, while there is no denying the fact that Paraguay has been content to remain picturesque, somewhat at the expense of her exchequer and general progress.

The racial circumstances of Paraguay, as a matter of fact, differ fundamentally from those of both Argentina and Uruguay. In both these latter the Indian element is a purely negligible quantity. It is true that Argentina still possesses a number of Indians in her far northern provinces as well as a few remnants of the Patagonian and other tribes in the south. But for social and political purposes these minor elements may be left out of consideration. Certainly the average inhabitant of Buenos Aires need never have an inkling that any native

blood of the kind flourished in the Republic, were it not for the rather curious fact that the majority of the police in the capital—a most efficient force—are of the dusky race. As for Uruguay, there can scarcely be a pure-blooded Indian left in that country.

The case of Paraguay is entirely different. This State, as a matter of fact, was the first of the three to be colonised, and in the early days stood for the headquarters of Spanish power in the entire south-east of the continent. But, with the division of the provinces, and subsequently of the independent Republics, it has fallen sadly behind in the race. That smiling land of varied fruits and easy life, the chief home of the old Jesuit missions, supports a population that is chiefly of the Indian race. He who travels outside the few large towns of this Republic will find himself left in the lurch if he depend on his knowledge of Spanish alone, for his ear will meet with infinitely more Guaraní than Castilian. Paraguay has remained to a large extent the country of the easy-going agriculturist, who watches his oranges, bananas, and other fruits and cereals as they ripen for him with a pleasing independence of attention that militates somewhat against the breeding of energy in the land.

Life in that country of soft airs and flowery slopes has remained simple even in the case of the aristocracy of the Republic, who, in the main, very wisely follow their own inclinations, and do not unduly concern themselves with what the dwellers in the large and populous centres of the world wear, or say, or think. Before long the inrush of foreigners



will undoubtedly produce its effect on Paraguayan life, and then no doubt the ladies of the humbler classes will abandon their beloved cigars, and clothe their bare and comfortable feet in French-heeled boots. But, in the meantime, there is still a taste for the lotus in Paraguay.

The circumstances in Uruguay, widely different from these, resemble those of Argentina very closely. It is true that the stage of their action is on a rather smaller scale, and that the Uruguayan is generally considered, as a race, of a more serious and reflective temperament than the Argentine, and is held to be lacking in many of the extravagancies that from time to time are laid to the door of certain sections of the other. It is a strange anomaly that a country which has indulged in such a surfeit of revolutions should be peopled by inhabitants who are somewhat remarkable for a steady-going private and commercial life !

Undoubtedly of the three countries it is the social life of Argentina which has changed the most. The movement has been marked even in comparison with most of the others on the entire earthly ball that have been speeding at a pace that threatens one day to outdo its rotations, and to whirl themselves off the earth of the globe. The Argentine has grown up so rapidly that he now finds certain topics of his comparatively recent history distasteful to the fastidiousness of his modern ethics.

Sixty years ago the respective civilisations of Argentina and Western Europe were not in the least on a par. In those days the southern Republic was frankly referred to as a semi-barbarous

place, and this not altogether without reason. By this it must not be supposed that numbers of intelligent, intellectual, and charming people did not exist within its frontiers. On the contrary, we know that a multitude of these lived their lives, and left their records behind them. But in those days the Gaucho element was still all-powerful in the land, and bands of irregular freebooting cavalry would trail across the plains, taking their own law of the lance and sword with them wherever they went, and waving the banner of terrorism to no small purpose.

Against such truculent hordes cities such as Buenos Aires could make scant headway. The best they could do was to stand as islands of comparative peace in the midst of the outer turmoil, and to defend themselves as best they could when the storm battered at their very gates. There is no denying the fact that the Campo of those days provided an epitome of lawlessness and savagery such as has a parallel in modern Russia—with the distinction that in Argentina of those days the question of land proprietorship took a secondary place, since the greater part of the fertile stretches there was at any man's service to ride over or to graze his cattle.

There is no doubt that at that period the Gaucho was a rough-and-ready mortal, in whom the almost daily process of cattle slaughtering had imbued a supreme callousness in the spilling of human blood. This was evidenced even by the popular form of executions and assassinations, which was throat-cutting, and the very numerous operations of this kind seem to have been performed with the same

complete indifference that characterised the slitting of a bullock's throat. This particular form of execution, moreover, was encouraged by the leaders of the roving bands on the praiseworthy score of economy; for a knife might cut innumerable throats, and be none the worse for it, whereas a firing party needed cartridges, and cartridges were expensive in those days. The Gaucho proper was a fine virile specimen of a man, but uncomfortably matter of fact in such mere considerations as those of life and death.

As to the polite society of those days, which was comprised for the most part within the city of Buenos Aires itself, its ethics were almost purely Spanish. Customs, habits, and fashions, if not identical with those of the Spaniards, were at all events founded on the model of Madrid, and the costume of the ladies showed this very effectively in the streets, into which, adequately guarded, they could only wander at the hours of the day set aside for that purpose. Journeys inland were only to be undertaken after profound meditation and preparation. A coach cruised across the country like a sailing yacht across the ocean, heavily provisioned, making the best course it could, the bodies of its spare horses, slaughtered for the purpose, occasionally serving as a pathetic bridge across an otherwise impassible quagmire, and the eyes of the travellers skinned for the sight of possible marauders when the season of the lofty all-covering thistles afforded the necessary means for an ambush. Nature and the primitive passions played a large share in existence then.



Of course all the world has changed to a certain extent within the last sixty years. At home, the labourers have discarded their smock frocks; beaver hats no longer set the seal on cricket correctness, and we have accustomed ourselves to call a spade a spade in a whole-hearted fashion, that would profoundly have disturbed the early Victorians. But, after all, there have been no fundamental revolutions in our architecture, manners, furniture, morals, and tastes. The progress in these has been as gradual as the growth of an apple-tree that spreads its fruit rather more widely every season.

Argentina, on the other hand, has dug up its garden, and has planted afresh wherever it could. It has become a different country. The fat Durham and Hereford cattle scarcely trouble to raise their heads at the noise as the restaurant cars and sleepers go thundering past them on their lines in neighbourhoods where keen eyes used to peer out from the estancia roofs for the sight of the dreaded long Indian lances pricking out against the level horizon. Trees have come to clothe the face of the once treeless plains, and have helped to slay the former scourge of the duststorm. You take your ticket in Buenos Aires for London, Paris, Peru, or Paraguay as a matter of course, and the Argentine is rapidly acquiring the tastes of a confirmed globe-trotter on completely cosmopolitan lines. Moreover, his wife need no longer travel to Paris in search of fashion if the excursion is by way of boring her. For the Paris modes are now brought to her door, some time in advance of their

appearance in the French capital itself, owing to the differences in the respective seasons of the year.

Naturally, the Argentine appears in different lights to different people. There are some who hold him to be a spoilt child of fortune, who is addicted to getting his own way in all things quite regardless of expense, and who is interested in very little beyond obtaining the best material results that his favourite world, which now, of course, includes London and Paris, can give him. There are plenty of examples of this type, it is true; but, after all, they are not confined to Argentina, although it is possible that the Republic is accustomed to bear an extra heavy crop of them.

They are pleasant people to meet, whose interests usually fail to carry them far outside the frontiers of dress, an ambition to mix in the titled society of other lands, a keen appreciation of the merits of bridge and the points of a racehorse, and an intense desire to cut a dashing figure wherever they may find themselves. They have long been noted for kindliness and for a charm of manner that is very real; but at the same time they retain a certain amount of the *laissez faire* of the South. Thus at a large dinner-party you may reasonably expect to find two or three places vacant of their expected guests, either because they have forgotten the engagement, or because they have forgotten to tell their host that they have remembered that they cannot come!

It may be that the inhabitants of the New World take the same interest in titles as the bibliophile does in his ancient volumes, or the collector of

coins in his rarest specimens. Perhaps the reverence has become a little less marked in the United States in recent years, but it is still deeply rooted in Argentina. Were I Secretary for Foreign Affairs, I think I would make every Minister Plenipotentiary appointed to Buenos Aires a lord as soon as he received his credentials—whether he liked it or not. It could do no harm to anyone, and would give much innocent pleasure to the inhabitants of that enterprising city. It would add to the gaiety of dinners and tea-parties, and might even make a difference in the wording of a treaty!

It certainly paid a certain steamship line well to appoint a marquis as honorary captain of their crack liner, while a person of humbler—and saltier—extraction attended to the navigation of the vessel. It is a little weakness of the sunny sons and daughters of the South, who appreciate rank but not ruins. It is true that there was an Argentine who contrived a completely modern ruin by means of a carefully engineered explosion. But the love of this particular form of the picturesque is rare. He was an exception.

The Argentine women are similarly constituted to the men. They are vivacious, and for the most part unusually handsome—the sight of a ballroom in the capital affords convincing evidence on this point. They are said by the malicious to reflect on matters of costume for nine out of every ten hours. It is difficult to gather the means by which this thought-reading feat is arrived at; but, judging by the astonishingly successful results in the various creations, there may possibly be something in it.



In a certain proportion of these very fair women may, I think, be noticed a somewhat unusual blend of worldliness and of ingenuous traits. They are apt, for instance, to be inspired with a mortal dread of doing the wrong—that is, the unusual—thing. Were one to offer another a gourd of the onetime national beverage of *yerba maté*, she would undoubtedly regard the offender with the same look of horror in her fine eyes with which the fair Rosamond cast on Eleanor, the bearer of the poisoned cup. No doubt the reason for much of this is the recent date of her emancipation. Even now she has not strayed very far into the wider field of the petty modern licences. She toys with no cigarettes—at all events in public; belongs to no clubs; retains limited notions of liquid refreshments; and the public platform is as innocent of her well-built boots as is the acoustic of her oratory.

So much for a sketchy analysis of a rather perilous topic. Nearly all these people, it must be repeated, have their counterparts in the other great centres of the world. But let it not be supposed that they constitute the entirety of Argentine society. By no means. There are many brilliant and hard-working men here who have made their mark even outside the frontiers of the Republic. Perhaps they have distinguished themselves most especially in law, philosophy, and medicine, and among some of their international feats may be mentioned the work of Doctor Drago at the Hague Conference. But beyond the most prominent, there exist a host of men of average capabilities who are striving very

earnestly and continuously towards the fulfilment of their ideals.

As to the old and historical families of the Republic, they have, of course, a fitting dignity of their own. But, as I have said, the Argentine in general does not hanker after any uncongenial historical facts concerning his country—no more, I suppose, than do the rest of us. He will tell you the reason quite simply, for he has a delightful gift of frankness at his command when he chooses to make use of it. “We are too young a nation,” he will say, “to wish to remember too much of the early doings of even our grandfathers, respected men though they were. Perhaps in two or three generations we shall welcome further research into the—very simple methods of those days.”

Argentine history, therefore, is inclined to confine itself to facts rather than to atmosphere, and many of the extremely able historians of the country have conformed to this convention. When you read of a famous battle between two rival *caudillos* in the first half of the nineteenth century, there must be a good deal of peering between the lines. The cannon smoke, manœuvres, cavalry charges, and the incidents of victory or defeat, all read exactly in accordance with the traditions of trained European troops. Whereas in reality the free-lance bands of Gaucho troops who fought so fiercely together bothered their heads extraordinarily little about anything of the kind. So long as the men had horses, spears, knives, *bolas*, a few muskets, and, if possible, some crude badge on their everyday costume to distinguish the side on which they

fought, what did they care about uniform, discipline, and the accepted battle formations of the period ?

From the historical point of view, therefore, it is possible that the Argentine is inclined to be a little *nouveau riche*. But I think the phase will pass fairly rapidly. Indeed, there are not lacking those even at the present time who take a genuine pride in the fact that their grandfathers lived the life of simple patriarchs, and, when sojourning on their estancias, contented themselves, perhaps, with a bullock's skull for an armchair. And that there was abundant romance in those days is most delightfully proved by the works of Cunninghame Graham and W. H. Hudson.

That the Porteños spring from a very sturdy and honourable race has never been testified to more enthusiastically than by the British officers who twice fought the inhabitants of the Rio de la Plata in the years 1806 and 1807. Some dozens of laudatory accounts are in existence from the pens of those who, having met the Buenos Aires in battle, ended by becoming their friends. But only one of these writers, Major Alexander Gillespie, need be quoted here. His opinions seem to deserve a somewhat lengthy reference. At the conclusion of the account of his adventures as a combatant and as a prisoner, he remarks:

“When we bid adieu to Buenos Ayres in 1807, Spain could not boast of more loyal subjects within her extensive realms than those of every description in the Provinces of La Plata. The narrow space of eleven months had exhibited their fidelity by two triumphs over a foreign invader, which covered



them with glory, while they imperceptibly stamped a new character upon every class of their population. . . .

“The noble aids which Buenos Ayres has afforded to their brethren of Chili, amidst their own pressures, are not only fine specimens of affection, but have added to their own glory, and must render them amiable in the sight of mankind. They are strong pledges of high honour in all their future relations with the world. . . .

“No city on the globe presents a more enviable importance than Buenos Ayres at this moment. She has not only conquered her own destinies, but the liberties of Chili, and is about to spread these blessings over Peru. . . . A flourishing commerce with the universe has now opened upon her; the spell of superstition is broken, and industry with contentment are seen throughout her plains. Thither, with the released bondsman hearing of the news, will hasten down from his recesses the untutored Indian, who will in time form, with all the other tints of the South American race, one united nation, one friendly community, and one happy family.”

A century of history has shown how fully this prophecy has been justified. Notwithstanding the interregnum of chaos, concerning which the susceptibilities of the modern Argentine are somewhat tender, Gillespie foresaw as far as the limitations of his period allowed. He could not well be expected to take into consideration the fact that no less than three railway termini, and one of them a magnificent specimen of its kind, would be in existence a century

later within a few hundred yards of the very spot where he and his comrades fought so gallantly against such enormous odds. Nor could he have imagined the almost ceaseless procession of giant steamers that were destined to churn the waters which at the time of the expedition were innocent of any other keels than those of the anchored British frigates.

Here and there, though, some few traces of the old customs of Buenos Aires survive; but the casual traveller will almost certainly have no opportunity of meeting with any of them. Such as exist are confined to private life, of which, as a matter of fact, the average foreigner in Buenos Aires sees less than he supposes. Thus a few years ago a particular friend of mine was bereaved of his wife, one of the most charming ladies in the capital. Owing to the nature of the climate, burial follows death within a space of some twenty-four hours as a rule, and having been informed that it was the custom, I went to call upon the widower upon the evening of the day of his loss.

The street outside the house of mourning presented a somewhat strange scene. It was blocked for hundreds of yards with motor-cars. All the time cars were arriving, others moving off. The house itself was crammed with Argentines, *distinguidos*, the cream of the Republic's society. Below, coffee and other refreshments were being served, while a continuous procession was mounting the stairs to where the widower stood. Each in turn embraced him with tenderness, talked movingly to him for a minute or so, and passed on, to give place to another.

The procession seemed interminable. It lasted for hour after hour, and at night a number of the widower's most intimate male friends arrived to keep him company until the morning. And so on until the funeral the next afternoon. The old customs of the country demanded it. According to these, it would have been a sign of bad friendship to leave the bereaved man alone between the hour of his loss and of the funeral. Long afterwards I asked how he contrived to stand an ordeal that must have proved absolutely lacerating.

"It is our way," he replied, "and it probably comes to the same in the end. Perhaps we get our grief in such large doses that the first edge of it may wear off sooner: who knows?"

He spoke English as well as an Englishman, and was an admirable product in every way of the old Anglo-Argentine *entente*. It was all to his honour that he should have kept up the customs of his country in this fashion. But, as he himself pointed out, it was eloquent of the temperamental distinctions between the two races when the real tragedies of life were concerned.

It is, I fear, inevitable that this book should be rather heavily obsessed by considerations of international rivalry, whether political or commercial. But in view of the circumstances of to-day it is difficult to avoid an atmosphere of this kind, nor would an attempt at its exclusion do justice to the situation as it is to-day. South America has already proved itself to a considerable extent the field on which the rivalries of the rest of the world have their play. Just now this consideration dominates every



other circumstance in the Latin continent. It carries right through all the affairs in this quarter of the globe, as a matter of fact, and its various features dovetail too closely in with each other for there to be any possibility of an ignoring of the whole.

As regards the eastern Republics of the continent, the definitely favourable actions and attitude respectively of Brazil and Uruguay, and the comparatively small influence which the remote situation of Paraguay causes her to exercise for the moment on this situation, places Argentina in the position of the central point of interest—for the time being, at all events. We may therefore spend some time on a further survey of Argentina's capital, the hub of the Republic, as it showed itself towards the latter end of the war.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ARGENTINE CAPITAL IN WAR TIME

THE bang of a maroon, a puff of white smoke floating for a few seconds high up in the clear sky before it is swallowed up by the blue—such, in Buenos Aires, have been the signals of news from the battle-fronts of the Old World. They were designed to conquer the less momentous sounds of a whirring and clanging city. And they succeeded. If Buenos Aires should ever be fated to suffer from a plague of air raids, it will have been well trained for the preparation.

As it was, the appeal had entirely the opposite significance to those which sounded in the threatened areas of London, Paris, and elsewhere. They brought the inhabitants out from cover in their thousands, and a new hum seemed to be added to the thousand and one echoes of the city's life, just as the noise of a dynamo will mingle itself all at once with the general hum of a vessel's machinery.

The effect was instantaneous throughout the whole long length of the city, from the squalid dock quarters of the Boca on the one side to the green, shaded, and flower-bedecked stretches of Palermo Park on the other. Newsboys went scampering along the streets, which in a few seconds had become doubly crowded, towards the offices of the various publica-

tions in order to collect their sheaves of special edition newspapers; groups of men rapidly formed themselves in front of the great blackboards that were about to bear the tidings that had been so noisily heralded; while others—real or professing subscribers, these—sped towards their telephones in order to make the harassed newspaper offices themselves resound to the ceaseless calls demanding private and immediate information.

Presently a gigantic crop of comment would sprout from every quarter of the city. The hotels and the *bolsa* would resound with the news, while from the deep leather chairs of the Jockey Club the thing would be discussed, with considerably more authority than elsewhere, as a matter of fact—excluding, of course, such lofty places as the Chamber of Deputies, the Senate, and the *Casa Rosada*, the Government House. Whether the news chanced to be good or bad there was no doubt as to the sentiments of the Jockey Club. Open rejoicing greeted the former.

“*Bueno*, we have won another victory!” would exclaim the most enthusiastic, oblivious for the moment that they were citizens of a non-combatant country. “One more step towards the only possible end!”

This sentiment, as I have already endeavoured to show, was undoubtedly characteristic of the majority of the Porteños, the inhabitants of Buenos Aires, in the time of the war. In the past, save in those very rare instances—so rare as to be practically non-existent—where his interests clashed with those of Great Britain, the Argentine has always



shown himself well disposed. In war time he continued to be so, perhaps in an even more complacent fashion than before.

After all, he could well afford to indulge in this attitude. There must be a certain satisfaction in standing on a rock, and watching from dry land those who are battling with the full fury of the storm, knowing all the time that eventually one's power will gain from the exhaustion of those in the midst of the turmoil. It is an ill wind that blows no one any good, and, to drop all such metaphor, in this case the gain lay principally in the depleting of Europe's stocks of cattle and wheat, and in the large gaps thus made which Argentina's waiting herds and fields stood ready to supply at enhanced prices.

Thus Argentine sentiment was inevitably pulled in two different directions. It regretted the necessity for the war, but, since the misfortune had to be, it found no small material consolation from the reflection that affairs might have been much worse from the point of view of its own pocket. They might, indeed, have been very much worse. The mere external aspect of the city spoke with sufficient eloquence to the fact that there was no question of any falling off in riches. On the contrary, life appeared considerably more decorative and expensive than ever before.

No one save a complete ass or a consummate artist would attempt to give a description of Buenos Aires in two or three lines. But, were the ordinary person, existing midway or so between these two poles, to attempt this feat, he might say that it was a city elaborately constructed on a site of small

natural beauty—a town of great enterprise, infested by millionaires. Many people are familiar with the London musical comedy in which the Argentine lady suffers distrust and mental shocks at the low price of objects in England—it was written in pre-war days! The exaggeration is only in a minor degree. Where the shopping woman at home will ask, “Which is the best?” her Argentine sister is a little apt to demand, “Which is the dearest?” And she will very seldom buy anything else.

The Argentine paper dollar has now taken on a dingy appearance. This is because the supply of special paper for its manufacture has failed during the war. The fact represents one of the hardships of the war in these regions. But there are at least as many of them as ever, and they colour very strongly the flat alluvial soil of the Argentine capital. Nevertheless, it would be unfair to suppose that nothing but the dollar counts in the town of central palaces, and outskirts that are still somewhat sordid. Moreover, the average Argentine is not only interested in making dollars, he is at least equally interested in spending them. This he does in the regal fashion that, previous to the war, made him the idol of so many London and Parisian shopkeepers. Neither London nor Paris has seen much of him lately, and he has been missed, though his own shops have gained enormously from the interruption of his voyages. There have been many who wondered how he was faring in his own country, and this it was my lot to find out, after a prolonged absence from the Republic, in the fourth year of the war.

It has been said that the United States has now

repaid to the Old World the debt that was owing on account of Columbus' fateful excursion. This is rather generously put, since the original obligations seem vague. But in any case it is certain that neither North nor South America have suffered in the mere affairs of the pocket from the struggle. There is a certain reluctance to admit this in Argentina, as elsewhere.

"We have been hard hit in common with the rest of the world," a very pleasant senator remarked to me, as he sipped his champagne and busied himself with the *filet de bœuf* that was following three or four previous courses, and that was destined to be followed by as many more.

"The want of industrial enterprise is alarming," explained a very prominent member of the Jockey Club, as he swept out to the races at Palermo in his Rolls-Royce car. "All the money seems to be locked up in the banks."

And only the previous week he had sold a quantity of prize pedigree bulls for a sufficient number of tens of thousands of pounds to make even his Argentine colleagues gasp!

The fact is that the average Argentine sentiment has urged a sharing of the Allies' troubles. But the Republic's larder has been too full to carry this out in a practical fashion from the self-sacrificing and ascetic point of view. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was abundant! There have been certain deprivations: a want of fuel, for instance, that involved the weekly use of hundreds of tons of maize in the cob for the stoking of the railway engines; and there have been the dirty dollar notes,



a few other inconveniences of the kind, including a haunting doubt concerning the spuriousness of certain brands of whisky.

Beyond such minor disasters, to land in Buenos Aires in the first half of 1918 was to go back some years—to the days when there was corn in England, and the food-ticket was not dreamed of even in the frequent nightmare of the traditional alderman. The Argentine capital appeared very much as usual. In many respects it had improved vastly in the course of a few years. Open spaces were more frequent in the centre of the town: the public gardens had been still more elaborated and improved; the number of football fields on the outskirts had increased, and many imposing new buildings and restaurants had sprung up in the course of the war.

Undoubtedly one of the most remarkable of these quite new institutions was the new Retiro terminus of the Central Argentine Railway. This stands as a most important landmark in the history of all such enterprises, not only in Argentina but throughout the world. The building, indeed, is a model of its kind, and there is certainly no terminus in London that can compete with it either in the spaciousness of its architecture, or the number of modern conveniences and inventions in which it abounds.

These are to be met with even in the restaurant which forms a prominent feature of the place. It is a restaurant of a type such as is seldom associated with platforms, porters, papers, and the pipings of engines. The latter, indeed, and all other sounds

connected with the bustle of travel, are completely inaudible from within the admirably furnished spot, where the waiters move in a rapid hush—an art that is only to be attained by the most exalted members of their craft—and where the *chefs* are almost certainly unrivalled in all Buenos Aires; no light fame in a city that pays such intelligent and enthusiastic attention to all material likely to console the flesh.

Just one gentle hint, however, is permitted within the stately room to remind its patrons that there are such things as engines in the neighbourhood. It is afforded by quite a gentle purring noise, not sufficiently for it to disturb the quiet of a diner who is unconcerned by its significance. It comes from a board set high up on the wall, which, in electric letters, and with soft and correct diffidence, calls attention to the fact that so many minutes will elapse before such and such a train starts for its destination. That is the only intrusion of the kind that is permitted, and this in a fashion that is almost touchingly apologetic!

There may be some who will condemn this restaurant venture, since, of course, it has been achieved with British capital, as of too daring an order. But there are very few in Buenos Aires who hold such views. On the contrary, it seems to me that the enterprise—as well as that of the entire structure of the terminus—is eloquent of no small amount of judgment and foresight. Buenos Aires has an almost morbid craving for the very latest and best, and it is a sober fact that in the founding of new establishments of this kind, nothing

is apt to be more extravagant than the attempt to save a ha'porth of tar !

I have no idea whether the actual financial results derived from this comfortable spot are favourable or not. But they deserve every success, and—whether they have yet achieved this desirable end or not—there is not the faintest doubt that they will ultimately attain to it. The reputation of the place has already attracted to it a variety of people who have not the slightest intention of catching a train after their meal, and several sufficiently diplomatic functions have already had their being in the suites of private rooms above the main dining-hall—very admirable species of self-contained flats, these, which enable the host to act much as though he were in a private establishment of his own.

Perhaps this halt at the Central Argentine Retiro Station has been unduly lengthy. But it has, at all events, been brought about by a type of British enterprise which cannot be passed over too hastily, and, as an example, it might well be widely quoted. As a matter of fact, it stands in a neighbourhood which is notable for these particular features, for in the centre of the wide Plaza just outside stands the tall clock-tower, the gift of the British to the Argentine nation in commemoration of its first centenary.

This Elizabethan structure, some two hundred and seven feet in height, was constructed entirely from material brought specially from England for the purpose, and it speaks in no small degree for the initiative and determination of the British in



Argentina that the building was completed in war time, thus proving the resolution of those concerned to bring to its proper conclusion that which had been begun. Thus on Empire Day, the 24th of May, 1916, the finished edifice was formally presented to the Argentine nation by Sir Reginald Tower, the British Minister, who had, from his first arrival in Buenos Aires, taken an indefatigable interest in the welfare of the structure.

Near the British clock-tower is situated the Paseo de Julio, one of the few wide thoroughfares of Buenos Aires, which runs just behind the line of dock buildings facing the river. Notwithstanding the pleasant appearance lent it by its long row of colonnades, and the fact that portions of it are within a few hundred yards of some of the most fashionable quarters of Buenos Aires, the place has long enjoyed a sinister reputation, and, in fact, has been wont to be regarded as one of the most evil quarters of the great city. It was a spot which abounded in dens that allured the unwary sailor, and only too often exacted the sacrifice of his life or his purse, or both.

The tales that were told of some of these grim haunts were purely hair-raising, and no doubt a reasonable proportion of them were true. But the Paseo de Julio now exhibits a notable sign of the times. Tall blocks of modern flats have arisen to break the line of its lowlier buildings, pleasant residences that are occupied by well-to-do folk who have discovered the charm of the wide river-side street, which will, no doubt, soon be transformed from end to end.

During the past few years, indeed, Buenos Aires

has begun to be seriously bitten by the tall germ of the skyscraper. To get a fair estimate of these it is necessary to mount to the summit of one, and from that point of vantage survey its fellows, whether full-grown or still climbing. The dead flat nature of the city will reveal every one of them, standing out as plainly as marguerites above a summer meadow. It is true that their altitude cannot yet compare with the gigantic New York structures. One of the tallest, in the Pasage Güemes, possesses no more than thirteen or fourteen stories—the number seems a little uncertain, since the existence of a restaurant on top appears to have induced some hedging in numerals with a view to sparing popular superstition from the infliction of a sinister number.

They are thus mere foothills compared with the architectural mountains of the United States. But they are there and they are steadily growing in height as well as in number, while their lifts soar and fall with ever-increasing frequency and rapidity. What would those cloaked riders, whose saddles, stirrups, and bridles glittered in heavy silver ornamentation, and whose horses trod softly the earthen thoroughfares between the lowly houses, less than half a century ago, have said to this? What would they have thought of the clanking of lift chains, the uniformed attendants, the bustling crowds, the roaring of tramcars, the white glare of electric light, in those very spots, dim and slumberous, where they had softly thrummed a guitar in praise of some eyes that gleamed with an answering softness from just the wrong side of the heavy iron framework of the window-sheltering bars?

The last echo of those days has been drowned

long ago in the harsh noises of paved streets and motor-horns. Besides, there are a number of very convenient flower-shops now which are fully prepared, at a price, to cater for the more sentimental hours and to save the youthful Porteño the trouble of bearing the blossoms himself to their destination. There is probably no more convincing testimony to the present-day amenities of life in Buenos Aires than the existence of these flower-shops, which have all sprung into existence within the last half-dozen years. Even a dozen years ago the value of these subtler refinements was realised by no more than a quite insignificant minority of the people of Buenos Aires. Now, there are even flower-sellers at the street corners. Thus do we begin to return to the tenderer side of life—by way of an excursion from its early simplicities through the somewhat crude deserts of elaborate ostentation. As to the early simplicities—that is another matter.

The municipal fathers of the city seem to have fallen into line with the new theories of floral appreciation, for in one of the central points of the town, near where the fashionable street of Florida strikes into the Avenida de Mayo, they have taken advantage of a recent clearing in the field of bricks and mortar to beautify the spot with shrubs and turf and flowers, and even to cause the street lamps to sprout from nests of blossoms that surround the posts.

It is a pretty idea, and one which may in a sense be accepted as symbolic. It may be taken as portraying hope. For this new Plaza, although nothing of the circumstances would be dreamed from its present aspect, really stands as the evidence of one of Buenos Aires' few modern failures. It was



from this central spot that the great new scheme of the diagonal avenues was to branch out. The elaborate plan, as a matter of fact, was praiseworthy in the extreme. The cutting of the diagonal avenues was to bring light, air, and a hitherto unknown spaciousness to the strictly rectangular system of narrow streets that comprises the busy city of Buenos Aires.

It was a grandiose idea, worthy of the ambitious city. It was known that the expense would be gigantic. One cannot carve even an ordinary city to pieces without having to foot a heavy bill, and in the case of Buenos Aires the rental value is almost double that of London. Nevertheless, it appeared that there were to be financial compensations apart from the intrinsic gain to the town. The vast increase of valuable frontage, the experts had it, would largely reimburse the owners of the various square blocks for the turning into thoroughfares of so much of their property.

No doubt there was a good deal in the theory, although if carried beyond a certain point the results might well prove astonishing. But so far the thing has never been put largely to the test. When the practical working of the plan came into execution Buenos Aires found that, for once, it had, vulgarly speaking, bitten off more than it could chew. The first diagonal avenue ate its way for a few hundred yards through bricks and mortar, and then the city fathers, overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task, cried halt. They wished to pause in order to reflect on the situation, and they are doing so still. One day, no doubt, when millions are exceptionally plentiful and the municipality

finds itself in a dashing courageous mood, the scheme will be completed.

Certainly the sample few hundred yards of the era that almost was, and probably will be, should justify any further attempts that may be made, from the architectural point of view, at all events, as the result is excellent and now stands before the inhabitants as the promise of a brighter and airier future. In the meantime the municipal authorities are doing what they can, and the site of every razed building must now withdraw itself modestly backwards for a certain number of yards before being again clothed with bricks and mortar and cement.

Buenos Aires, in any case, was still the extravagant and wayward queen of the southern world. The shops overflowed with every conceivable necessity and luxury. The fashionable street of Florida, the racecourse, the theatres, concert-halls, hotels, and tea-rooms—all these were at least as crowded as ever. The ladies in their Parisian costumes still glowed like butterflies, and the boots of the men continued to show the same lustre. Beneath the colonnade of the Jockey Club building in Florida the knots of the *jeunesse dorée* still gathered at midday to pass the time of day and the latest bits of local news with each other, and to cast critical glances on the passers-by. Even the Sunday crowd of loungers congregated as ever in the afternoon at their chosen spot in the Avenida de Mayo, where the telephoned results of the races were announced one by one.

[There was only one circumstance that seemed seriously to worry the Argentines. That was the neutrality of their nation. They did not seem to

know why they were neutral. Certainly, speaking generally, they did not want to be. It had to do with their President, they explained. They could not understand how it was that their President was neutral, and the majority were quite honest in the matter.

They were extraordinarily open in their views, since Argentina is essentially a country of free speech. Journalists and authors would passionately upbraid their country's policy, vowing that it was a betrayal of its Latin trust; statesmen would express themselves in more guarded language to the same effect; students would continue to apply with avidity for fresh batches of pro-ally literature, while the overwhelming majority of the general public followed suit after its own fashion. Nevertheless, there existed a very wholesome respect for the power at the head of the State. This was frequently evidenced in somewhat curious ways.

On one occasion there were many people of importance at a tea-party given by a youthful diplomatist, an arch-expert in such matters. Next to me sat a lady, whose name, in view of what follows, it would be an act of arch-treachery to give! In fact, as a precautionary measure, I may as well confess at once that I have completely forgotten it! An ardent supporter of the Allies, she dealt with the vexed topic with bitter eloquence.

"*You* have a war on your hands," she concluded with emphasis; "*we* have a President. Goodness knows which is the worse calamity!"

Then, quite suddenly, she became struck with panic. It appeared that she had been entirely carried away by her enthusiasm. Without the



slightest warning her last phrase seemed to rise before her like a condemning spectre. Swearing her hearers to secrecy, she became doubly alarmed at some jesting replies. Before the makers of these could realise the fruits of their levity the lady had hastened to the host, and was imploring him, as a personal favour, not to include her name among the list of guests that would appear in the papers. Not reassured by his declaration that, having himself no concern with the press, any account of the function that might be forthcoming would be obtained from the hotel officials, she fled to the manager, followed by her amazed host. Not even then completely pacified by the assurances of all concerned, she departed in a fluster—doubtless to consult with her numerous acquaintances and friends concerning the wisdom of her words!

[Now this trivial incident is instructive in its way, since it represents the attitude of a good many Argentines. These may entertain no peculiar affection for the President (of whose personality, indeed, the majority have an extraordinarily small intimate knowledge), and by no means a full understanding of his policy, of whom very many profess to know still less. But in general they yield a respect to a remarkably strong personality that in the case of some of their number amounts to a sensation almost of awe.

As a topic of conversation in Buenos Aires, indeed, the President is ubiquitous, and ever-recurrent. Perhaps, in order to give the true local colour, that is the reason why he appears in more than one place in these pages!

## CHAPTER IV

### COSMOPOLITAN INFLUENCES

JUDGED from the point of view of the British and the Allies in general, there were five political varieties of Argentines during the war. There was the man with British friends and ramifications, and there was the other whose convictions made him the supporter of the Entente. These were apt to show an enthusiasm for the cause that could not be excelled by those directly concerned. Then there was the Argentine whose sympathies refused to stray largely beyond the frontiers of his own Republic, estancia, or even office. These were rare enough, and, fortunately, the two remaining classes were rarer still. They consisted of those who, for business reasons, maintained clandestine relations with the Germans, and of those who, having connections among the German community, suffered from an honest, if misguided, sentiment for the German cause.

These last had to adopt a minor and chastened key. Nothing else was possible in view of the attitude of the overwhelming majority of their countrymen. Apart from the real rush of feeling, it was the mode to be *pro-aliado*—and, undoubtedly, it was quite a good mode. In Argentina fashions count at the very least as much as anywhere else.

So that those who at heart might be more or less indifferent, made it a point of honour to do as the others did.

“When I look at that sort of scene,” said a junior military attaché, gazing down from the balcony of a ballroom at the whirling throng of couples who were dancing to the strains of an excellent band, “do you know what I think of? Rows and groups of yellow dead faces sticking out of the mud of the trenches!”

But then it was a neutral country. There was much water—that itself held only too many corpses—between Buenos Aires and the trenches. There was no first-hand token of the war’s horrors to influence the people. The Argentines gave sympathy and money, and not a few of them nobly volunteered in Paris for active service. But the daily cables, the weekly illustrated newspapers, even the letters from Europe of their friends and compatriots, did not suffice to throw a damper on the festal life of their capital.

Considered dispassionately, it is difficult to see how it could. The waves of the bloody whirlpool had lessened into little eddies by the time they reached the shores of the Rio de la Plata. The Argentines did what lay nearest to their hand in the matter. They had flag-days for the Allied cause. They lent their halls and rooms. As I have already related, they rose in their seats and cheered or hissed at the telling passages in such war plays as that of the French: “Un Soir au Front.” Their newspaper leaders and articles were pungent and sincere. But they had no use for sackcloth and ashes. Far



from it, since it was nothing but the orders of the Argentine ladies that enabled the remaining Parisian dressmakers to continue their trade !

Certainly the Argentines lost no opportunity of acting when the misdeeds of the Germans were brought home to their door, as, for instance, when the details of Count Luxburg's criminal campaign were so dramatically revealed. Then the youth of the capital rose in its wrath, and took the law into its own hands, not a little to the discomfiture of the plotting German residents. Here is a description of one of the acts of reprisal—the burning of the German Club—given by one of the leaders of the adventure, a young Argentine of a very notable family:

“ Everything was arranged beforehand,” he explained with reminiscent enthusiasm. “ It was to be an act of war. If we were not to be allowed to fight in France, we determined to do our share of protest here. When we gathered together to act, everything was ready—down to the last match ! Some of us were told off to rush the place and eject the Germans. Others were given charge of the incendiary material, while a detachment was chosen to impede the firemen and, if necessary, to cut the hoses. All went off like clockwork. It was worth while to see the portraits of the exalted Boches—the *Distinguidos*—come flying through the windows on to the pavement. And then the thing blazed and the fire-engines arrived. But the men knew us, and knew that we would not do a silly thing—unless there was good reason for it ! They took our advice. And so did the police, who moved the

crowd on when the building was well alight. Perhaps it was not much, but it was a protest against the methods of Count Luxburg and his friends. They have remembered it since—these others here !”

It may not have been much. It can scarcely go down in history as one of the salient incidents of the war ! But it was an explosion of public opinion that had a healthy effect, as the young Argentine rightly explained.

Indeed, it was difficult to regard Buenos Aires as a really neutral city. The attitude of the public was completely that of an ally. A victory of the Entente was the signal for a whirl of sympathetic demonstrations in the centre of the city. Bands of men would parade the thronged streets singing the “Marseillaise” with enthusiasm, and the words of impromptu orators would stream out in their torrents here and there. In the courtyard of the *Nacion* newspaper would surge a dense mass of humanity—men with political views unselfishly averse to keep them to themselves—that never failed to gather there on such an occasion. And all the time waggish newspaper sellers would be emitting shouts: “Hindenburg expected in Buenos Aires to-morrow !” “Last moments of the Kaiser !” and any other phrases that they conceived best fitting to the moment, and likely to produce a sympathetic laugh.

The enthusiasm was quite as marked in its way in those circles that are known as “select.” There would be a popping of champagne corks only a little less rapid than machine-gun fire. At the

Jockey Club, the hub of the capital, where the British Minister was frequently accustomed to dine, his table would be surrounded by the *distinguidos* of the city, who brought their warm congratulations with that inimitable grace which the Argentine knows so well how to employ when he chooses. Occasionally the affair approached as near to a regular demonstration as the severe ethics of the club permitted.

“Another victory for our side!” they would exclaim. “Congratulations, Señor Ministro! We have them!”

I hold no brief for neutral Argentina. Yet it would be unfair to close one's eyes to the fact that the neutrality of the Argentines was benevolent to a degree. It was, for instance, sufficiently benevolent to induce one of the Government Departments of the Republic to accept a collection of British war-films, and to take a theatre in which to exhibit them, inviting not only many of the Cabinet Ministers, the staff college, the cadet corps, some hundreds of officers of high rank, the naval and military attachés of the Entente and neutral countries, but the entire staff of the British Legation as well.

It was a curious spectacle, that exhibition. From one's own point of view the sight of the audience was as interesting as the pictures on the screen. It was worth while watching the rows upon rows of Argentine officers in their pickelhaube helmets and uniforms of German pattern, gazing with absorbed intentness at scenes which, for the first time, gave them—and many of the British spectators as well—a true insight into the combatant might



of the British Empire. For these were men who had been trained on the German model, and who, previous to the war, had been brought up to regard German military science as infinitely the highest of all.

Towards the conclusion of the performance one of the Cabinet Ministers delivered himself of a verdict which was plainly general throughout the hall.

“This,” he said in English, and in a voice which he did not trouble to lower, “is the beginning of the end !”

In actual fact it was rather more than that. But no one had any conception of it at the time. Perhaps the exhibition came rather late in the day. Nevertheless, it was a striking instance of the power of intelligent propaganda, when applied to actual and plain facts.

There is one circumstance which perhaps has not received its proper amount of attention in measuring the amount of Argentine sympathy accorded to England for her part in the war. Had the conflicting interests of England and Germany alone been at stake, there is every reason to believe that the sympathies of the Latin Americans would, in general, have gone out to the former. But I do not think that we are justified in flattering ourselves that the expression of these sympathies would have known that generous torrent of ardour that has swept towards the ally of France.

For many generations now France has served as the model and tutor of many South American States, and has been regarded as the friend of all. There were very few of the educated classes in South

America whom her terrible situation during the war did not touch to the quick. It was only natural, therefore, that those who stood by the side of France enjoyed, throughout the southern Republics, an added affection for the sake of their ally.

In this respect the situation of the Allies was very favourable almost in every State of the continent, but most especially in Argentina, since the remarkably large proportion of the Italians here to the whole of the population served as an additional, and very powerful, link between the two.

It has occasionally been brought against the Argentines that their enthusiasm for the allied cause grew with its mounting success. This certainly was so, so far as outward appearances are concerned. Indeed, it would have been strange had it been otherwise. In the darkest hours of the struggle there was small opportunity for the neutral to show open enthusiasm. And if the sentiments of a certain number of the Republic's inhabitants were not of the type which is swayed towards the side of success, the Republic must be peopled by a race of supermen in a new and spiritual sense of the term.

It may safely be said that on the part of the general run of the people the sympathy never for an instant wavered—even allowing for the fact that the polite dweller in these regions is a little apt to say rather more than he means—and that the distress of the majority of the Argentines in the days of gloom was genuine and most freely expressed. The grimmest and most critical moment throughout South America, it need scarcely be said, was after

the battle of Coronel. The period which intervened between this and the battle of the Falkland Islands was sufficiently anxious to try the nerves of the most confident *pro-aliado*.

The occurring of a single momentous event at one's very door is apt to be far more impressive than the news of a dozen victories or defeats, cabled from afar. It is not to be wondered at that the Germans chose the moment for coming out into the open, and making demonstrations wherever they could. Nevertheless, these produced a remarkably small effect, even at a time when all that the South Americans had to judge by of naval affairs was that nothing remained of the British squadron in their oceans save the *Glasgow*, around whose damaged hull, even as she lay in the Allied waters of Rio harbour, parties of rejoicing Germans were sailing in small boats, specially chartered for a species of ostentatious picnic that was destined never to be repeated in the course of the war.

As regards the other side of the picture, it would never do to neglect it for the mere reason that it happens to be out of sight. That way political madness lies—to say nothing of an accumulation of dust and hostile microbes eager and willing to emerge when the time is ripe for them to breed unpleasant diseases. Surely it need not be supposed that the somewhat lurid light of the Central Europeans in South America will consent to remain permanently under the salutary bushel which has now covered it for some years. Nor need it be hoped that, merely because they have lain as low as hens in a hailstorm, the presence of so many thousands



of Germans in the Republics of the River Plate is no longer a fact to be reckoned with.

Compared with the British, their numbers have gained in proportion in the course of the war, although it is to be hoped that this matter will rapidly adjust itself. For, whereas the former sailed to Europe in their thousands to join the colours, almost the entire community of the latter stayed where it was, for the very good reason that no freedom of the seas happened to be available, so far as they were concerned. And this force, retained in its commercial surroundings, has by no means remained dormant. Its policy has somewhat resembled that of the German so-called High Sea fleet, previous to the battle of Jutland. It has remained under cover, but with its eyes wide open for the opportunity of a rapid deal and a still quicker flitting back to its earth.

Moreover, it would be unreasonable to suppose that a community which included so many wealthy and influential members was entirely devoid of friends among the South Americans, notwithstanding the pro-ally tendencies of the great bulk of these latter, and the pleasing fact that no other attitude was considered quite the thing among the "best people." Granted that nine-tenths of the inhabitants of the Rio de la Plata have been cordially in favour of the Allies' cause, there remains at least the one-tenth, and among this fraction are to be counted some sufficiently noteworthy names. Moreover, with the peace once signed, it is useless to blink an eye to the fact that such distaste as may now obtain on the part of benevolent neutrals to dealings

with the Germans must inevitably fade, at all events in part, before the flood of alluring offers, not necessarily of the sale of actual German goods, which almost certainly will flood these markets sooner or later.

I am, of course, referring to purely local conditions, and not to the far larger problem of the ultimate output of German-made goods, which raises another issue altogether. Also, in practical considerations of this kind, it is necessary to leave out of account, for the moment at all events, those gigantic plans which aim at the betterment of humanity and the improvement of its affairs. Doubtless the world will gain from their adoption, if this desirable conclusion should ultimately be arrived at. But in the meantime it is necessary to take things as they are, not as they may be in a more enlightened age.

Certainly it would be unwise to attempt any forecast of the future trend of events in the South Eastern Republics, without taking into consideration the potential German efforts. So far as immediate circumstances are concerned, it is very important to remember that the Spanish-speaking South American Republics constitute almost the only important commercial field which remains open to them, and it is upon these that they are morally bound to concentrate. Whereas Great Britain still preserves all her old connections with the world, outside Central and Eastern Europe, and just at the moment there is no doubt that she has her work cut out to deal with these.

It is practically certain that the Germans will win a certain number of commercial victories. It

would be remarkable did this not prove to be the case, since during the past few years they have had everything to gain, and practically nothing to lose. But any possibilities of this kind need not necessarily prove disconcerting, provided no such piratical situation is permitted to arise, such as that which was devastating international commerce to so grievous an extent in the years previous to the outbreak of the war.

It should not be very difficult to anticipate the main directions which the German efforts will eventually take. In the course of the struggle the merchants and agents of that nationality made the most strenuous efforts to continue their sales, and thus hold their *clientèle* together, quite regardless of the country of origin of the goods they sold. As may be imagined, the endeavour was not made without considerable financial cost to themselves. It seems that they will have little choice but to continue their business on these lines, until the time comes when their nation is again in a position to export its own manufactures. But whether they will be obliged to maintain the enhanced rates of their payments for goods is far more doubtful, and, in the ordinary nature of events, somewhat improbable.

If they find it worth while to continue their commercial propaganda on semi-political lines, which is by no means unlikely, they will no doubt make all the capital that is in their power out of the restrictions which the Allies had no choice but to impose on the trade of the world in general. This was one of their trump cards during the period of



hostilities, and it does not seem probable that they will see fit to replace it within their sleeve in the near future. The answer, of course, is supplied by the policy of Germany herself during the war on every possible occasion when the opportunity arose to hamper the trade of her rivals. And in her case there is no evidence whatever of that signal and painstaking justice and consideration which characterised the Allies' handling of this delicate matter. But, from the point of view of the Central Europeans, needs must when the devil drives, and it will be as well to be prepared for a somewhat widespread campaign on these lines.

As regards ocean traffic, it is clearly improbable that the Germans will be enabled to offer any serious competition in the carriage of passengers or goods for many a long day to come. But there are other directions in which they are practically certain to strain every nerve to open up new communications. For instance, the lack of cable control has formed one of their bitterest grievances of recent years. They are now attempting to remedy this by the institution of wireless services on a formidable scale. Preliminary steps have already been taken towards this, and it is probable that there will be an attempt to supplement these on a more important scale in the near future.

As a conclusion to this chapter a short sketch of the general German methods of propaganda during the war may not be out of place. As a mere matter of history the topic is of small importance, but it contains some practical elements of instruction that should have a certain value of their own. The

lessons of the past are by no means without their value. The uncomfortable limitations of humanity provide nothing else to work on.

As may be imagined, the tune of the German propaganda in this Republic tended steadily to sink from a major to a minor key. It started in a sufficiently buoyant fashion. Had the methods of the imperial warfare proved less brutal and less comprehensive, it is possible that it might have continued to exist in a more or less open fashion to the end. But, after the days when the plot was revealed which had as its intended victims Argentine and other neutral ships, all chance of this disappeared. Then the notorious Count Luxburg, after a period of concealment, had to escape by back ways from Buenos Aires, avoiding the thoroughfares lit up by burning German buildings, and filled by crowds justly enraged at the outrages he had inflicted upon their nation.

This, naturally, was the death-blow to any open and direct demonstrations. Those who worked for the cause of the Central Empires had no choice but to hide their dubious light under a bushel. Nevertheless, this essential cloaking did not prevent the real activities of the German agents in the Republic, although on the surface their evidence gradually grew less as the war proceeded to its end. Little by little the streets became **denuded** of German flags, although one of the last obstinate remaining pieces of bunting of this kind continued to fly—at a safely high altitude—for a period of time that was considered indecent in that most select of all thoroughfares, the Florida itself!

Entertainments, too, and subscription lists, which had formerly been openly organised to provide funds for the aims of the Fatherland, grew clandestine, while the reluctance of cinema proprietors and the like to let their halls for the purposes of the Teutonic campaign stiffened into definite refusals. One of the most striking symptoms of the times, moreover, was the fact that a mere Chargé d'Affaires remained in charge of the interests which had been so flagrantly manipulated by his former chief.

In spite of this passive confession it was from the official diplomatic centre that the furtive efforts of the German community in Buenos Aires and elsewhere were directed. It is clear that the instructions of the Legation were carried out in a true Prussian spirit of obedience. Seeing that no open demonstration was possible without risk of damage to limbs and property, the representatives of the Central Empires had no means of counteracting the spontaneous processions of South Americans and foreigners hailing from the Entente countries that were wont to parade with enthusiasm the streets of the Argentine capital.

The choice of weapons with which to fight their cause was, therefore, not a little restricted. In the main these consisted of four varieties: the employment of cash, the manipulation of the press, the fomenting of strikes, and the seizing of any chance and fleeting opportunity which might offer itself of putting a spoke in the wheel of the settled pro-Entente policy, regardless of whether the foreigner or the South American might suffer from the attempt.



On the whole, the programme of the Germans may be said to have crystallised itself into the endeavour to get others to pull their chestnuts out of the fire for them. Perhaps this fact alone should not be laid too heavily against them, since it was quite evident to them that they were morally and physically unable to accomplish this task for themselves. It was their business, therefore, to buy sentiment. The market proved itself dear: it was an expensive process.

The direct expenditure of German money was undoubtedly lavish, and it is clear that a certain return must have been obtained for this, but since this had effect only in the less reputable quarters, the results in almost every case were negative rather than positive. The field afforded by the press was, of course, the most important of all those offered by any public body, and it was here that the most ambitious efforts were made. Undoubtedly one of the greatest advantages derived by the German propagandists lay in the fact that they, having long prepared for their task, were thoroughly in their stride even at the very beginning of the conflict. Indeed, so ardent were their measures at that period that for a time many of the lesser Argentine publications were honestly in doubt concerning the respective claims of the opposing groups of nations, and one or two of these went the length of adopting a strong German bias.

It was impossible, however, to bring this kind of influence to bear on the really important organs—notably those quite remarkable morning newspapers, the *Nacion* and the *Prensa*. These, pos-

sessing their own extensive cable services, and a world-wide organisation of correspondents, were able to judge for themselves, and the quite reasonably impartial attitude with which they in the first instance regarded the circumstances of the war rapidly changed to a warm sympathy with the cause of the Allies as the plain facts of the case began to emerge from the confusion of claims.

It is true that one or two of the lesser organs never attained to quite this pitch of cordiality, but in these cases the aloofness displayed was not necessarily due to a benevolent attitude towards the enemies of the Entente. During the later part of the war, therefore, the Germans were left very much to their own resources as regards propaganda in the press. To their ably and unscrupulously edited organ, *La Union*, I am referring at some length elsewhere, as well as to its curious flowers of romance that blossomed luridly and alone, and so it would be superfluous to dwell upon this sheet here.

The weapon of the strike was, naturally enough, one of those which lay nearest to the German hand. It served a double purpose. Not only was it a most convenient means of crippling the important British-owned industries, such as the railways and other enterprises of the kind in the Republic, but it tended to prevent the supply of foodstuffs from reaching the capital and the various sea-ports, and thus stopped a certain proportion of these from being shipped to Europe. But since by no means all of these supplies were destined for shipment abroad, the weapon proved double-edged frequently enough.

It would be idle to suppose that every one of the

numerous strikes and labour disputes which have been brought about since the outbreak of the war have been due solely to the instrumentality of the Germans, since such episodes have become as much part and parcel of the Argentine soil as elsewhere. But a good deal of circumstantial evidence exists that they never missed a favourable opportunity of producing a dislocation of traffic and of any industry that was likely to serve the Allies. The Argentines, of course, suffered quite as much in some respects from this procedure as did the foreigners, but it does not seem that this circumstance was as generally realised in the Republic as it should have been.

It is needless to say that the scope of what might be termed the general practitioner science of German propaganda was very wide. This extended from the surreptitious distribution of minor pamphlets to the placing of bombs in Allied vessels loading in the Republic, and included the broad range of opportunities that extended in between. An object with which this policy was very enthusiastically concerned was the abolition of the "Black List," the roll of dishonour which marked down the hostile traders, and which, of course, was peculiarly obnoxious to the Teutonic merchants.

There were many attempts to mould public opinion on this subject. One of these comprised the formation of a committee of so-called influential Spanish merchants, who protested with fiery indignation against the indignities which, they alleged, had been put upon their formerly flourishing trade. A very brief enquiry sufficed to show that practically all of these were not only of the most insignificant

order of store-keepers, but that their commercial record was strongly sullied.

The labours of the committee were not long-lived. For a time the walls of Buenos Aires glowed with posters, bearing the names in full of the committee beneath a vehement condemnation of the alleged tyranny of the measure. After a while, funds apparently running low, these were replaced by fragments of cheap paper, on which the continuation of the protest was crudely chalked. Finally, the Spanish committee threw up the sponge, and performed a most curious and interesting *volte face*. Issuing a new design of poster, they disavowed by public proclamation their previous policy, and bore a strangely open and belated testimony to the necessity for the Allied procedure, and to the strict justice with which it was carried out. This performance—which, it is not without interest to note, occurred towards the conclusion of the war—probably surprised the Entente population as much as it did the former German subsidisers of the committee. But in any case it is improbable that the attempt on either side achieved any results worth mentioning one way or the other.

Open German intimidation was, of course, out of the question in Argentina, but here and there veiled methods of repression were attempted. These, it would appear, very seldom met with the least success. One of those against whom this kind of coercion was tried was the Emir Aslan, the former governor of a Turkish province in Asia Minor, who held the post of Turkish Consul-General in Buenos Aires at the beginning of the war. Aslan, a most



interesting personality, and a man of considerable learning, held his own views on the rights and wrongs of the struggle, and did not hesitate to express them. He achieved no little celebrity by refusing to deliver up his consular offices to the man appointed to succeed him, pointing out that, as a keen supporter of the Entente, he represented the true spirit of Turkey, which, he maintained, had been ignored by the Government of his country that was then in power.

For a time he had to undergo the modified horrors of a kind of private siege, but in the end he had to evacuate his post with all the honours of war. But his enterprise did not confine itself to mere resistance. Having had the official dust cast from his shoes, he resolutely entered the lists on the side of the Allies, and took to lecturing and to editing a very ably conducted *pro-aliado* publication. One of the most salient features of the office of this latter was a large poster which adorned its walls, and which showed the broadly grinning head of the Emir on a charger held up by the hands of an obviously disgusted Kaiser. This clever piece of work possessed no small significance beyond its qualities of humour, for Aslan had received threats against his life on numerous occasions, and in the remoter spots where he would go to lecture, he was accustomed to find masses of hostile literature littering the streets. The authors of both these and of the threatening letters, however, remained anonymous, and, as in the case of most marked men, no actual bodily harm was ever offered the resolute Emir—possibly from lack of opportunity.

On the whole, it may be said that, after its first adventurous attempts, the varied and expensive German propaganda in Argentina met with a somewhat remarkable lack of success. There were apparently two principal reasons for this. The first was that it very soon became clear to the Argentines that the stock Teutonic phrases specially adapted for South American use were completely at variance with the German deeds, of which they themselves were destined to enjoy a certain amount of first-hand experience. The gulf between fact and fancy was too wide here to be bridged by even the most elaborate structure of mere words.

The second reason was at least as important as the other. This, again, was concerned with facts and fancies, but of another order. It was not easy to convince the South American public of the prosperity of the Central European cause and of the might of its navies, when the war had once got into full swing. For in Buenos Aires it was plain for all to see that, while the German mercantile vessels were all the time lying stagnant in the docks unable to put their noses outside for fear of capture, the British ships continued to flit in and out of the harbour, appearing very much as usual, save for their streaks of camouflage and the guns in their sterns, by means of which they helped to maintain the freedom of the seas.

## CHAPTER V

### SOME TOPICAL EPISODES

HERE is a scene which I reproduce from notes taken at the moment. It concerns the departure from Buenos Aires of the Argentine Jewish contingent, which, thanks to the efforts of the British Minister and the British Military Attaché, had received permission to serve with our forces in Palestine. It was their ambition to assist in the redemption of their country, and probably to settle down as farmers there afterwards. By this time they may be tilling their own fields, for all I know, so rapidly have matters progressed.

The hall of the Plaza Constitution Station is crowded. Small knots of people have even overflowed into the brilliant sunshine of the broad street, along which the tramway cars proceed with some caution through the throng. Within the building are many groups and single individuals in khaki, wearing hats of the pattern common to the Americans and to our own Dominion troops. Each, whether individual or group, is surrounded by a closely pressing escort of friends, all of marked Hebrew type. The friends find it difficult to restrain their emotion, but the volunteers in khaki play their part well.

As the tall figure of the British Minister mounts

the steps from the street, the babel of tongues—Spanish, Yiddish, and half a dozen others—ceases. There is a surging of the crowd, a strong burst of cheers, and a number of flags unfurl themselves over the heads of the multitude.

With the Minister in the centre the crowd sways and jostles towards one of the departure platforms. Presently there is a halt in front of the waiting steamer train, and a pause of expectancy. Then a middle-aged, bearded man is hoisted up on the shoulders of three volunteers in khaki. He sends forth a call at the top of his lungs:

“Viva el Ministro de la Gran Bretaña! Viva el Señor Reginaldo Tower!”

This time the assembly rocks to and fro to the sound of a roar of cheering. The tall figure of the Minister stands out like a lighthouse rising from a sea of waving hats and hands. The flags of the Allied nations are now waving about where he stands, and long volleys of cheers begin afresh.

“Viva el Ministro! Viva-a-a-a! Viva el Agregado Militar Britannico! Long live the British Military Attaché! Viva-a-a! Viva Inglaterra! Viva Francia! Viva Belgica! Viva Italia! Viva-a-a-a!”

The acclamation continues in waves that rise and fall. The crowd heaves, its faces ablaze with enthusiasm.

There is another pause, a sudden silence, and a moment's wait of tense expectancy. Every Jew is craning forward, his body rigid and motionless. Then over the heads of the throng is unfolded the blue and white of Argentina with a Jewish emblem



in gold in the centre—the standard of the volunteers.

At the sight of it many are moved to tears. The waves of emotion have mounted to their culminating height. The outburst that follows is more muffled, but deeper than ever.

“Zion ! Jerusalem the Free !”

Presently the black-bearded man has begun his address. He is very eloquent—very moved by the subject of his speech. It is an acknowledgment to Britain and to her Minister, a warm and palpitating expression of gratitude for what is being allowed, and for the promise of the future. His, too, is the song of the Promised Land. He and his comrades are on their way to help in the fight for it, to shed their blood for it, and, if the will of God permits, to live in the shadow of its olive trees and amid the verdure of its vineyards.

And, indeed, there is ample food for reflection as his impassioned words pour out. It is no usual thing that is being enacted in this commonplace railway station. True, there have been Jewish legions in the British and in other armies of the Entente. But they fought for the countries of their adoption, and under the standards of these. This was different. This was a new and unique thing. Here was a body of Hebrews—Argentine subjects, it is true—who were starting out to fight for Jerusalem as a purely Jewish corps. This was a Hebrew army, however tiny—a little composite David—a thing, surely, that has not been since the days of the Old Testament. For these men were about to fight for Jewish ideals and for the

Jewish nation. The impassioned words, punctuated by the cheers and bursts of emotion, were not for nothing. There was history being made in this very unromantic building, to the sound of whistling of engines and the growling of porters' trucks. It was a thing to remember.

Before the volunteer in khaki has finished the first warning whistles have sounded from the guards of the train. The speaker raises himself higher on the supporting human shoulders.

"Good-bye!" he calls in English. "Good-bye! Good-bye!"

His last long-drawn call dies away in the confusion of a sudden movement of the crowd. There is a final enthusiastic surge about the smiling figure of the Minister, and then follow countless eddies of embraces and handshakes.

The Jewish officer is standing at the end of a carriage calling for his men. Then streams of the khaki *Legionarios*, bearing flowers, headed by their standard, hasten towards the carriages reserved for them. And then—the last Godspeeds, the last waving of hats and hands, a heavy rumbling of the wheels—and where the train had been are empty lines.

There is nothing more to be done. The Jewish crowd rolls soberly away, the majority of its members to betake themselves to their very modest occupations. But it is certain that there is not one of them who will ever forget this day. Even to the most ordinary Gentile who took part in the function its significance came with a strange force.

The cosmopolitan atmosphere of Buenos Aires

made strange bedfellows in war time. In the enforced contact of hostile elements it represented the Switzerland of the New World. In the early stages of the conflict it has frequently happened that Ministers of contending countries have found themselves in the same hotel lift. On these occasions it used to be said that the German chief of mission, who eventually was obliged to make so hasty an exit from the country, would hasten to secure the seat, and would softly whistle the "Wacht am Rhein," while soaring upwards or—more appropriately—descending, the various flights. From time to time it would happen, too, that an organ-grinder would churn out the strains of the "Marseillaise" in front of a German-owned villa in the suburbs—a performance that does not seem to have culminated in the customary thank-offerings that these somewhat rare instruments are wont to extract.

Among the residents of Buenos Aires, moreover, who hailed from neutral European countries, were very few whose sympathies were not more or less actively swayed on the one side or the other. In such matters it is notoriously unfair to generalise. But, allowing for the many excellent or notorious exceptions, it might be said that the respective national friendliness to the Allied cause ran in the following order: Norwegians and Danes first, Swedes second, and Spaniards—the last not a very good third.

It is, indeed, a rather remarkable fact that, while a considerable number of Spaniards took little pains to conceal their hostility towards the Entente during the first half of the war, there were not a few Turkish pedlars and merchants who undoubtedly

proved themselves strongly in favour of the Allies. But it is needless to say that the friendship of these subjects of an enemy country could not be relied on! There were the Turkish divers in the docks, for instance, who, enveloped in regulation diving costume, were accustomed to pad the bottom of the river in search of the sunken coal which they would pull up in such unexpected quantities. Many of these were reputed desperate fellows, as ready to place a bomb beneath the bottom of an Allied steamer as to send their baskets of treasure-trove fuel to the surface. As a matter of precaution these were not allowed to approach within a certain distance of such ships.

The Turkish merchant was a difficult person to deal with. On the whole, he grew unduly fat in purse and person from his illicit trade in war time. A notoriously wily bird, living in his own quarters in common with those of other nationalities from the Levant, he had frequently cause to thank Allah that he had been mistaken for a Syrian Christian, and he took remarkably small pains to clear up the unavoidable tangle to the powers that were. Thus many a fortune was accumulated in a hovel that might have housed a beggar.

Then, of course, there was the ultra-commercial neutral of a more prominent order, whose international sentiments were concerned merely with the most favourable markets for his wares. It was through the medium of these that the German traders received the majority of those goods to prevent the receipt of which the Statutory List was introduced. No doubt the business was extremely profitable,



but it incurred the risk of the illicit trader's name being itself placed on the Black List, with all its resulting inconveniences. When one of these erring merchants found the meshes closing about him he would frequently beard the officials in their dens, and would confound himself in fluent indignation that the mere breath of any such suspicion should have fallen upon him. Frequently his fiery protests were cut short by a courteous exhibition of documents which completely condemned him. After this he would depart—to think out other ways and means.

There were others of this offending class of trader who adopted a more suave manner. Suspecting that their names were in danger of receiving the hospitality of the unwelcome Black List pages, their hearts would warm with sudden generosity towards the Allied cause. They would forward lavish cheques for the benefit of the British Red Cross. Some of the least sophisticated would even hint that they would be equally gratified if the contribution failed to get past the pocket of the official concerned. There was much to be said for this procedure! In any case the Red Cross Fund benefited, and in some instances it achieved exactly that object against which it was supposed to serve as a precaution. This was when the conscience of the contributor, playing him a scurvy trick, erroneously told him that he was being suspected. Then, the consequent careful investigation would afford him a costly proof that “*qui s'excuse s'accuse!*”

As to the Germans themselves, their career in Buenos Aires was chequered. In the days when fate seemed to promise them, brightly if fitfully,

the place they claimed in the sun, they were in evidence, and so noisily so at times that more than one fracas occurred at the railway stations between their boastful parties and some groups of Englishmen. Gradually, as the war proceeded, their numbers and voices diminished. On the *Bolsa* one might hear their speech, uncomfortably subdued; but in the main streets scarcely a word of German was audible. Some would talk together in Spanish, but, as Germans, they had disappeared. It was said that the numbers of Swiss citizens were increasing with an amazing rapidity. It is possible that some of the casualties among the German merchants may have been made up for in this way! There are few other explanations. Certainly there were no means by which they could leave the continent in bulk.

To give them their due, they possessed one small army which maintained its prominence to the end. Numerically, it was of little importance, consisting as it did of the sellers of the newspaper *Tageblatt*, and the pro-German sheet printed in Spanish: *La Union*—to which I am referring more fully in another place in this book. So far as I could gather, they were four in number, three of them men and one a woman. They would take up their posts at the corners of some of the main streets and emit melancholy and long-drawn cries of *Ta-a-a-a-geblatt* and *La Unio-o-o-on* with a dreary persistence that, I suppose, was quite admirable in its way, having regard to the cold aloofness of the passers-by.

It must have been depressing work for these

ardent propagandists. Indeed, towards the end of the war they themselves seemed to realise something of the discordance of their notes. Within a few yards of each were the great blackboards on which shone the story of the Allies' victories, each fronted by a rejoicing crowd. Unhappy weeds endeavouring to float against the human stream on which they found themselves cast, no wonder that the nerve of these papersellers occasionally failed them! No wonder, too, that, as the men of their company would catch the triumphant eye of an enthusiastic *pro-aliado* their lowly drawl would fade into an abrupt silence, and that, their onetime truculence long dead, they would make a strange effort to appear ordinary citizens, boulevard loungers—or, in fact, anything but sellers of Hun newspapers! One of them, at least, had suffered his own species of martyrdom. That was when a crowd of young Argentines made a bonfire of his newspapers before him, when he had the mortification of seeing his fiction go up in smoke. On the whole, this determined band might well be recommended for such of the Iron Crosses as remain over; though against this claim must go the unfavourable circumstance that, so far as I know, they had murdered nothing but the truth!

There is a certain hotel in Buenos Aires which is the haunt of the magnates of industry and high finance, not only of Argentina, but of many other parts of South America as well. It is also very largely concerned with the lighter hours and the lesser episodes of diplomacy and intrigue. It is a spot in which millionaires rub shoulders with

Ministers-Plenipotentiary, where the rich *estanciero* discusses his lands, the railway manager his lines, and the banker his ways and means. It is a spot, moreover, where the *haute vole* of Argentine society gives its more public entertainments, where the stage or musical celebrity glitters, and, finally, where the adventurer on an ambitious scale—who cannot afford to patronise a lesser house—seeks his prey.

It was not easy to obtain a room in this hotel during the final year of the war. So great was the demand upon its space that all the suavity of the Italian manager—himself no mean diplomat—was tested in the persuading of the members of foreign missions and other persons of no small importance, to be satisfied with a bed in a bathroom or in some half-glorified servants' quarters.

Although this hotel is the counterpart of many of the best in London and Paris, it breathes a different atmosphere from these latter. The Argentine *Distinguidos* and the circle of foreign people that count are not so numerous, compared with the general population, in Buenos Aires, as in European capitals of a similar importance. Thus on the accepted fashionable nights—the *Noches de Moda*—the proceedings somewhat resembled those on a great liner, where the invitation dinner-parties mean successive collections of the same people differently grouped.

But, as in similar institutions in Buenos Aires, you must go on the proper day if you would see the Argentine *Distinguidos* and those others that are popularly but curiously known as the “best people.” The rules with regard to this are stern and im-



mutable. One place will be fashionable on Wednesdays, another on Saturdays, and so on. If you select a wrong day, you will see no one, and, not knowing your Buenos Aires, you will condemn the town as a dull place, by which you will be liable to wrong it.

Now the number of Allied diplomatists who occupied rooms in this hotel was formidable. Needless to say, any person, or even personage, suspected to be in sympathy with "the other side," hastened, too, to seek its interesting shelter, where not a little quiet work and counterblast was affected—not always to the disadvantage of the Allied cause.

It was in this hotel that a lady from Uruguay appeared in a manner that was rather strangely unheralded considering her personality. I have christened her the lady from Uruguay as being the safest way to avoid personalities, since she actually hailed from quite another Republic! The lady from Uruguay first made her appearance on one of the *Dias de Moda* just at the hour when the lounge was most crowded. It was fashionable to dine late just then, and, although nine o'clock had just struck, the excellent band was playing to a dining-room empty of all save expectant waiters and to a thronged lounge.

She was one of those women who compel the masculine eye—I will not say as a snake holds a rabbit's, since that would be libellous to both sexes. It was not alone that she was fair and very graceful, her abundant hair cut short where it reached her shoulders, with eyes that were fine even for a South American's, and with a figure that her black gown draped and showed to perfection.

Neither was it that the poise of her head and her movements were peculiarly attractive. So were those of many others in the room. She had a strange polarity, and what, I suppose, must be termed, *tout court*, an air !

The lady from Uruguay was accompanied by a distinguished South American who had always associated himself loyally with the Allied cause. As she passed through the lounge and sank into a leather chair, there was an obvious stir among a company sufficiently hardened to all nationalities and to all manners of appearance. Secretaries of Legation gazed curiously; splendidly gowned women threw a cold but keen eye in her direction; half-a-dozen Americans withdrew their before-dinner cigars from the corners of their mouths, and as for the youth of Argentina—the white-waistcoated, slim-waisted company, with brilliantly shining boots and hair, the gilded youth whose clothes came without exception from noted London tailors—they leaned forward with that eager and frank interest in the fair sex that is their especial hobby. Whether they shifted their position to a more advantageous spot—one nearer to the lady—or whether they compelled their unwilling frames to remain where they were, their eyes remained fastened to the lady's face as firmly as flies are glued to the papers of the sticky stuff that attracts them, and that kills them—by starvation !

The behaviour of the Uruguayan lady was faultlessly discreet. She paid no ostensible attention to those who looked at her, and seemed to be confining her attention to her elderly escort. She was speaking

in Spanish; but once she broke into a French phrase which I, inadvertently, overheard: "Qu'il soit bien sec, alors!" It was presently made clear that this rather cryptic sentence referred merely to the champagne which her friend was to order.

At a sign from the latter at least three waiters darted forward. As curious as the young Argentines, a number of them had been hovering in the neighbourhood, including the Turk, who was responsible for the coffee and the Cingalese who concocted in his spare time the various curries. But the tension was soon to ease itself, for presently the newcomers betook themselves to a corner of the dining-room, which was now beginning to fill, and were soon lost to the view of all but their immediate neighbours at the meal.

The very next day it seemed to have become known to at least half the people in the centre of the city that the lady from Uruguay was an author. Large numbers of her latest books were already in the windows of the most fashionable booksellers of the town. Dozens—and there may have been hundreds for all I know—of people bought copies. The work was in the nature of an ecstasy. Upon its pages the lady had spilled her very soul. The result was an outburst to her dead lover that abounded in passion and punctuation marks. Condensed, its pleasing and amorous lines resolved themselves into one unanswerable question: why was he dead and why was she living? There were reminiscences, too, sufficiently tender to bring confusion and a halt to the efforts of a secretary of legation and a junior military attaché who, com-

plying with the request of some ladies ignorant of Spanish, endeavoured to translate them.

It was only too clear from all this that the lady's spirit had been consumed with the frankest of passions. Yet the wild flame had left no traces on her serene and youthful face. This did not detract from the interest of her personality, least of all in the eyes of the young Argentines. Before she had been ten days at the hotel the number of these admirers had increased to a formidable degree, and by that time two or three, through the instrumentality of the elderly friend, had won to the distinction of a speaking acquaintance with her.

Presently, the lady's circle of friends having largely increased, she gave a party. It was not in the least the kind of function that one would have expected from her hands—and from her temperament as revealed in her book. It was a children's party. The affair was very well staged in a prominent part of the hotel. Never was there a softer and more touching exhibition of motherly solicitude. Even the children themselves submitted with a good grace when the more prolonged caresses interfered with their mastication of cake. The affair left a marked impression on a large and discreet gallery.

"There!" protested the husband of at least one lady to the wife of at least one man. "Didn't I tell you so?"—and got no more than a shrug for his pains.

The second entertainment given by the interesting newcomer occurred no later than towards midnight the following evening. It readjusted the balance of affairs. It included a round dozen of her young male Argentine admirers, and three or four weightier



and maturer persons besides, who obviously attended the ceremony with no little curiosity, and drank the abundant champagne with a somewhat thoughtful air. This, as a matter of fact, was destined to prove only the herald of a startling series of such hospitable functions, each of which grew longer and a little more noisy.

As these continued it became noticeable that, although the circle of young men was steadily increasing, the elderly persons had dropped out. Nothing should have suited the lady better, according to those vivid pages of her work, which revealed nothing in common with the sober ideals of middle age. Yet for the first time the lady's countenance seemed to lose something of its serenity, and when the absence of her original introducer became marked, there was a faint added shadow on her brow.

The rumours which had begun to spread by this time may have had something to do with this. There were whisperings of clandestine meetings, of quiet journeys to Spain, of curious hints and offers, and of a remarkable propensity on the part of the lady to seat herself next to those tables where the members of the various legations were wont to lunch or dine. There, she would remain in dreamy meditation over her claret, her eyes slumberous, but just possibly not so her ears.

The departure of the lady from the hotel was as sudden as had been her arrival. She was escorted to the door of the hotel by the urbane manager. She showed herself gloriously calm and indifferent, but not so her escort of young men, who indignantly vowed that they would never set foot across the

threshold of the establishment again—but who turned up punctually and to a man at the dance the next evening.

This is a somewhat abrupt disappearance of a lady from whom the reader has doubtless expected more. The worst of true stories is that their endings are apt to leave so much to be desired. Doubtless this was the case with the circumstances of the lady from Uruguay herself, and it was probably through no fault of hers that the conclusion was so vague. On the other hand, it is just possible that she, being of a sensational temperament, was merely amusing herself! In such cases it is not easy to distinguish between trivialities and deeper motives—between pleasure and business, in fact!

The famous race-meetings at Palermo on the outskirts of Buenos Aires suffered no interruption on account of the war. Argentina is no longer a country in which the old-fashioned South American type of revolutions occur—these would seem to have been transferred bodily to many parts of Europe—but in any case it would probably take something even more than a local revolution to stop the running of the crack horses on the smooth sanded track of Palermo.

The races at Palermo have always meant more to the general Argentine society than do those of any other part of the world to their inhabitants. Throughout the year Thursdays and, more especially, Sundays, are the days marked out when the world which counts, and the masses—that somehow or other will insist on retaining the delusion that they, too, count—betake themselves to the great racecourse, the former by car, and the latter by train or tram.

Frankly, there are apt to be some anxious moments in the course of the drive. At about twelve o'clock the broad avenue leading to the course is black with rushing motor-cars and taxi-cabs: The nerve of the Latin chauffeur is at all times amazing, but when it comes to a cheerful orgy of road-risks, the man of Buenos Aires is, I think, completely unapproachable by his colleagues of Paris and the Peninsula, and is scarcely to be outdone even by the maddest motor-man of Rio de Janeiro.

On the road to the Palermo races a blanket—a fairly large blanket!—might cover half-a-dozen cars swinging along at some forty miles an hour. One may watch the bonnet of one's car swaying within two or three feet of the rear wheels of another just in front to the right, and very little farther away from those of a third to the left. And one knows only too well that there other wild cars exactly behind blowing on the very number-plate! One slip, and there would be a grim heap of cars in the road. But it never, or scarcely ever seems to happen, even when the cars—seeing that the rule of the road allows passing both on the right and left—develop appalling paroxysms of twisting and dodging spurts. In fact, one is accustomed to arrive, safe and sound in body, if with harried nerves.

After all, the course is worth the risk. It is a marvel of completeness and finish, from the carefully rolled track itself to the streams and ornamental bridges that adorn its interior. The paddock is admirable of its kind, and the stands are justly world famous. Most notable of all is the one sacred to the members of the Jockey Club. Let us suppose that we have arrived opposite this, and that the

car that has panted out with you is sauntering away with an empty interior.

Having passed the array of green-uniformed officials at the great wrought-iron gates, you will move on to the back of the marble-based stand itself, catching a glimpse of the palm-planted paddock to the right as you go. If you do the regulation thing you will make for one of the lifts that lead to the dining-room floor. There you will make the acquaintance of more green-uniformed officials, who will relieve you of your coat, hat, race-glasses, and of any other impedimenta that you may happen to have about you. You will then enter the dining-room with its large array of French windows, giving out upon a spacious terrace that overlooks the entire course.

You will, of course, have the usual lunch. A little *Fiambre* to start with—some slices, that is to say, of cold turkey, tongue, ham, and beef, that would in themselves constitute a lunch as understood in England. You will then follow on with soup, fish, and the usual amount of courses that the more elaborate kind of Argentine mid-day meal demands, including, if you desire it, *Puchero*, an excellent national dish which somewhat resembles Irish stew in a more intricate and comprehensive form. In Argentina we have learned to feed on a scale fitting to the vast national pastures and herds!

Before lunch is half over a green-uniformed commissioner with a yellow band on his arm will be standing attentively at your side, the racecard in his hand. He is there to take your money, and to put it on the totalisator for you. No need to hurry out and attend to these matters for yourself: the Jockey Club has studied the ethics of



creature comfort too deeply for any contretemps of that kind to be possible! Presently he will return, bearing your tickets. If you take a keen interest in the race you will desert the table for a moment to get a view of the horses approaching the post! If the party is sociable, rather than purely sporting—as is very often the case—you will remain where you are. If the official comes again with a sheaf of notes you will know that you have backed a winner. If he fails to return you may feel quite certain that you have not.

In any case you will have your coffee and cigars on the terrace outside. Once arrived at that spot, you may remain there—if you are too lazy, that is to say, to pay your periodical visits to the palm-shaded paddock—and watch the remainder of the day's events entirely at your ease. And here, on the terrace itself and on the great sweep of marble steps that stretches downwards from it to the enclosure below, is all Buenos Aires. Here, for instance, is the Argentine Minister for Foreign Affairs among a numerous group of colleagues and official foreigners. Here is the President himself of the Jockey Club, a personality known in almost all the capitals of Europe, and one of the most important livestock breeders in the world. Here, too, are the staffs of the Legations—the British and American usually forming joint groups—the smart leading journalists, the cream of the staffs of the *Nación* and the *Prensa*, the estancieros, the wealthiest of the merchants, and the most notable of the lawyers. And, last but by no means least, here are the be vies of the Argentine ladies in their most wonderful and expensive toilettes.

It is about the groups of these last that the cinema operators flit most assiduously, grinding the faces, actions, and dresses into what may possibly be eternal fame! It is trying, it must be confessed, to have one's every gesture registered while indulging in nothing more strenuous than in taking tea! Who can be entirely natural in the circumstances? If you stop conversation for the sake of dramatic action, you are haunted by the fear that you may be brandishing the cup at the wrong angle, or that the relentless machine may register a splash of moist pastry upon your waistcoat. If you remain passive, cold, and resentful, it results in an outrage not only on the film, but also on the record of yourself. The only remedy is to pretend that you are really enjoying your tea, and to leave it to the cinema operator to do the rest. It was never my lot to see one of these enterprising efforts reproduced, which, perhaps, was just as well.

The behaviour of the crowds who blacken—purely from the physical point of view—the cheaper enclosures is wont to be orderly in the extreme. In Buenos Aires there does not seem to exist a special racing class among the humbler orders such as, even to the man who has never visited a racecourse, appears in an unmistakable throng from time to time at such termini as Waterloo and Victoria. The “bookie” at home, moreover, undoubtedly possesses many good points. But he does not specialise in æsthetics in such matters as clothes and voice.

The Palermo racecourse knows no bookmakers, and the populace is in no way to be distinguished from that in any centre of the capital. A regulation Ascot costume, it is true, is demanded from members

of the Jockey Club at the more important meetings of the year, but the humbler classes are content with the black suit which is more or less *de rigueur* with them on a Sunday. Perhaps it would be an exaggeration to say that a fracas is as rare at Palermo as in a Bond Street tea-room; but it would seem to be very little less so. My own experience in this has been confined to a most trivial episode. That was when a burly member of the lower classes attempted to usurp the functions of the youthful Jockey Club officials at the entrance, and to fetch the motors for some of the members. A diminutive policeman appeared on the scene without delay, and ordered him from the spot. Instead of obeying, the intruder drew himself up haughtily and uttered a protesting "Pero, Señor!"

That settled his hash. The policeman said no word. He rapidly felt down the other's ribs in a precautionary search for a hidden weapon. Finding none, he took the big man by the sleeve, and led him off to some place of confinement within. The thing was done with a quiet and methodical neatness that spoke well for the capabilities of the police—although in this case the crime did not appear very heinous to the onlooker.

Needless to say, the conversation in the members' enclosure at Palermo is not restricted to actual racing chat. The diplomatists are not there merely to give their opinion on the points of horses. And it is the same with the Argentine Ministers, the journalists, and a very large proportion of the throng, including, needless to say, very many of the ladies. No, the talk is as varied as the scene is brilliant. Its topics range from a treaty or a

concession to a deal in land or candlesticks; from the last Allied victory and the partition of Europe to a whiff of scandal and comments by the ladies on the other ladies' dresses. Sometimes a rumour—telephoned from the centre of the city, and usually, alas, premature—of a peace offer from the Germans stirs the crowd just as wind sends waves through a cornfield. And all the time the horses are coming out from the paddock cool, and returning covered with sweat, while the chalked figures on the giant blackboards records the huge sums that have been staked, won, and lost.

If you are not keenly interested in the last race, you will, for your comfort, leave before it has been run. You will stroll to the gates, outside which the apparently interminable lines of motor-cars wait. A boy—in khaki instead of green uniform this time—will take your ticket with its identifying number, and in a few minutes your car will have drawn up in readiness. But, should you wait for the end—you will have to wait infinitely longer. Even the organising genius of the Jockey Club cannot prevent that, though a small army of boys rush to and fro, each trying to pick his employer's car from out of the many hundreds that advance slowly in serried masses towards the gates.

There is nothing more to be achieved beyond the run home—a repetition of the drive out. There is even the same sensation of surprised relief as the car draws up beneath the portico of the hotel (one of a long line here again), within which the waiters are already struggling to serve the crowds that have thronged the building for tea.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE WORK OF THE BRITISH IN ARGENTINA

No doubt when the full story of the great war comes to be written, some decades hence, the history of the efforts of the British South Americans will be adequately told. The services rendered by these took almost every shape and form, but the military branches must naturally come first in the recital.

I can only speak with comparative authority on the military feats of the British residents in one of the Republics—Argentina. Here are one or two of the main facts concerning their record. About seven thousand men left that Republic to take their share in the fighting. A large homeward flight of combatants, this, from a foreign country! Curiously enough, the proportion that this represents to the entire British population of the Republic seems to be not a little in doubt. Conservative estimates put it at 12 per cent. Other people, of a more enthusiastic temperament, place it as high as 22 per cent., and refuse most resolutely to abate a single unit from their claim.

Undoubtedly the discrepancy is in a large part due to the fact of the volunteering of many sons and grandsons of the British residents in Argentina—men whose nationality is Argentine as well as British. I cannot help thinking that a certain

amount of confusion has arisen owing to this, and that those who claim the latter percentage have adopted the total of the fighting British and Anglo-Argentines on the one side, and have failed to add the Anglo-Argentine population to the total from which the percentage was taken. However this may be, and if, for the sake of compromise, one places the correct figure somewhere between the two, it is certain that the number of these volunteers was very high.

It may readily be believed that the qualifications of these men for their task were as high as their numbers. The life of an estanciero is eminently suited as a preparation for an arduous bout of soldiering, and even among the residents in towns the proportion of the physically unfit is quite unusually low. The necessary keenness is fully testified to by the mere numbers of the volunteers. But as an instance of the spirit which prevailed among this fine set of men, I will give the war story of one of them whom I have the pleasure to know as a friend. Finding himself in England at the outbreak of hostilities, he made every effort to join the first groups of the expeditionary force. But, since he was over the military age, his years stood up against him as an apparently impassable barrier, try where he would. Nothing daunted, he smuggled his Rolls-Royce car over to France by a devious route, made his way boldly to the front, and eventually won a commission in the cavalry, in which branch of the service he served with distinction. Naturally this case cannot be regarded as in any way unique. I merely give it as an example of the spirit which was so abundantly shown.

Truly, if England has a long arm, the call of her heart is still more far-reaching! It was nothing that many of these volunteers from Argentina gave up an income of thousands a year in order to serve as privates; countless similar cases have occurred in almost every part of the world. The men of dual nationality ran an added risk in sailing for the front—those, at all events, who were approaching the age when they were liable for their period of military service in Argentina itself. Thus many a gallant youngster, having obeyed England's call, might return to Argentina to find himself branded as a deserter. This actual fate, I believe, befel three young Frenchmen who, on their return from serving in Europe, were sentenced to three years' imprisonment, and to a year's military duties at the end of that term.

It was a sorry reward for gallantry. But, from the Argentine point of view, the matter was not easy to arrange. No legal remedy existed short of altering the constitution of the State. The British Military Attaché proved himself equal to the occasion.

“Consider the ultimate benefit from all this military experience to your own army in the case of a future war!” he urged with truthful, but genuine, diplomacy. And thus a friendly arrangement was arrived at with the Argentine authorities, themselves far from averse to seeking a loophole, which did away with the risk of such hardship.

There were those, of course, whose blood was of too ancient a vintage to be spilled on the battlefield. But, if they remained behind, they gave their share

in dollars. The exact sum which the British in Argentina provided has, I think, still to be computed. But the lavish manner in which this was contributed may be exemplified by one quite insignificant instance, when a piece of wire from the trenches in Flanders was put up to auction in the presence of a small number of people. The half foot of metal brought in the equivalent of no less than four hundred pounds! Within two or three months, moreover, a hundred thousand pounds had been subscribed for the benefit of the families of those men who had sailed for the front.

There were, of course, many ways of raising money for Red Cross purposes and other objects of the kind. The procedure was much the same as in England. It was a question of six for the giver and half a dozen for the receiver—by no means a bad plan when you desire to obtain practical results. Thus people very kindly met together in order to play bridge and to give half their winnings to a certain fund. Others listened at concerts and looked on at entertainments in the happy certainty that the money that they expended for their tickets was destined to assist a good cause. Yet others purchased tickets for subscription dances, and careered through the function with the pleasant knowledge that they were enjoying themselves in order to help. Which, of course, was really and truly the case. After all, there is no reason why you should walk to fetch the doctor when you can motor through pleasant scenery in order to effect the same object!

In some respects the athletic sports, held for these



patriotic purposes, were the most interesting of all such events. These were undertaken with the most praiseworthy enthusiasm by the younger people, so much so, that I once had the opportunity of witnessing two of these on the same day—not a bad performance, when it is considered that Argentina is, after all, not a British colony !

One of these functions, as a matter of fact, deserves more than passing notice. Held at General Urquiza, one of the suburbs of Buenos Aires, it threw a bright light on the possibilities of English influence on a cosmopolitan community. It had been organised by the English head of a large mixed school, clearly one of those fortunate beings in whom the art of instruction is so deeply implanted that, were he the last man left in an all but dead world, he would busy himself in arranging a curriculum—and probably a quite suitable one—for the angels, or for the inhabitants of the nearest planet. Or, again, were he born, in everyday circumstances, one of a pair of twins, he would undoubtedly spend the first few hours of his tender life in demonstrating to his brother the most sanitary method of howling and of performing the few simple necessities of his opening life. Let it not be thought that there is any malice or depreciation in these remarks. Very much on the contrary. A few hundred men of this schoolmaster's kidney would mean a priceless asset to the empire.

As it was, here were his hundreds of pupils of both sexes, with their relations, friends, and acquaintances, all gathered together for a festal and most remarkably strenuous day that should bring

financial grist to the tragic mill of the Red Cross. They were very full hours, those, where every minute jostled the next. There were more events than I had dreamed possible in mere human athletic sports. It was nothing for two or three different events to be run—or jumped or struggled—off at the same time, each with its own particular groups of starters, judges, and spectators.

But the interest in the proceedings was not limited to mere feats of organisation. There were the competitors, the pupils of this very cosmopolitan institution. There were British, Argentine, French, Italian, Uruguayan boys and girls, and boys and girls of I know not how many nationalities beyond, from anywhere between the ages of eight and eighteen. All of them had been taught not only to work but to play on the British model—and, after all, the latter is not much the less important of the two. An ordinary hundred yards' sprint is never without some intrinsic interest of its own. But when there are representatives of the youth of some half a dozen nationalities or so in a heat, the affair assumes an importance that is not to be measured by the mere time made by the winner.

As it was, the enthusiasm displayed both by the cosmopolitan competitors and spectators was pleasant to watch. The Argentine policemen themselves had caught the spirit of the hour to the full. Vastly interested as they were, they assisted in keeping the various courses clear with all the cool nonchalance of tried hands at such affairs. It was one of those moments when the complete understanding between masters and pupils seemed to

infect everyone on the ground. And when the British Minister, speaking in Spanish, had put a most able and accurate seal upon the proceedings, one felt that it had, indeed, been a good day.

The whole affair provided a striking illustration of what can be effected under efficient management. One would like to see a system of this kind carried still further on more extensive lines. But opinions differ. Some of these, I confess, I find difficult to understand. Would it be believed, for instance, that just about this time at a meeting held in Buenos Aires, which was indirectly concerned with the spread of the use of the English language in the Republic, an orator who professed to have given considerable thought for the welfare of England, his country, rose upon his legs and protested against the movement. It would be double-edged in its effect, he explained. It would result in stirring up more competition for the British !

It was just about this time, too, that a scheme which had as its object the encouragement of the better class of Argentines to give their sons the advantages of an English public school education was strongly opposed by a temporary official in London—on the ground that the innovation would be dangerous to the moral tone of the public schools at home ! I wonder what the heads of the leading six of these would say to the suggestion that their respective five or six hundred boys bade fair to be morally and intellectually ruined by the introduction within their midst of half a dozen little fellows from South America ! And this in the face of those very favourable examples that have already been

supplied by those young Argentines who have been at English public schools. To say the least of it, it is a doubtful compliment to the stability of our institutions.

To return, however, to the topic of the work of the British in the River Plate Republics during the war, it is certain that the enthusiasm displayed on all hands was only to be expected, but it was none the less gratifying for that. It may be said without exaggeration that there was not an agency of one of the large British companies established there that did not put its country's affairs before its private concerns—or, at all events, that did not realise that the two, being identical, went hand in hand.

These centres of an imperial work were ably assisted by purely private endeavour, and the feats of Canon Brady—than whom no living man has gained a juster fame in connection with Seamen's Missions and Boy Scout labours—in themselves approach perilously close to an epic.

It is necessary to deal with some caution with a various-sided personality, such as that of Canon Brady. For his efforts do not glow in the pulpit and the Mission Hall alone. He is distinctly a muscular Christian, with a power of drive behind his gloves when he enters the ring that would ensure respectful and wary criticism, were any needed.

As the head of the British Seamen's Mission Brady had been accomplishing an imperial, as well as a spiritual, work for a number of years before the outbreak of the war. Afterwards, in the stress and severe trials that befel the mercantile marine, his labours became, if possible, of a still more vital



order. He is essentially a sailorman's parson. He understands the British sailor, and he sees to it that the British sailor understands him.

It is in order to prevent the least chance of the waning of his innumerable friendships that the canon sets out on his daily excursions on the river. Every morning, whatever the weather, his motor launch careers to and fro along the seven miles' length of the docks. You may go with him if you like, and watch his work for yourself—that is to say, if you have no objection to swarming up the giddy rope ladders that hang down the sides of tall steamers, leaping across coal-filled lighters, and, in short, following wherever his white yachting cap leads. It will be no sinecure, I can promise you that. It is a very up-and-down parish, this one between the yellow waters and the blue sky, bounded by the warehouses and giant grain elevators, with occasional tree-shaded spaces in between. It seems to the ordinary person to possess more of the features of an obstacle race than anything else. But that does not seem to matter in the least to the person chiefly concerned. And, as the launch throbs its way from one ship to another, there are salutations all along the line of British vessels, truly hearty greetings and grins sent towards where Canon Brady stands at the wheel, with his bull-dog, "Bully Brady"—whose chief annoyance in life seems to be that he cannot climb rope ladders—seated complacently beside him.

There is not a steamer plying in the River Plate trade that is unknown to this worker on the waters. His rooms represent a favourable strategic position on the bank of the river, and a new arrival, floating

slowly between its two tugs along the centre of the channel, never fails to be spotted by his keen eye. Then Brady goes aboard. Usually he finds himself among old friends. But sometimes it may happen that the ship is strange to the port, and the captain of the newcomer may be in a surly mood. Then it takes all the canon's knowledge of the sailorman to prevail. But I should say that his failures were almost miraculously few, and in any case, "you can't be thin-skinned at this job," explains Brady.

There are innumerable stories told concerning the canon's adventures on board some of the less reputable of these craft that have drifted in from time to time, strangers to the port. Some of them verge on the Homeric. But I will not give them here, since I heard none of them at first hand, possibly through a sense of modesty on the part of the chief actor.

Of course, no man could carry on a work such as this without an unusual faculty for the remembrance of human faces. I had a remarkable instance of this once, when in the captain's cabin of a tramp steamer that had only just tied up alongside the wharf. On deck the canon had been greeted by various groups with a curious kind of semi-grudging cordiality. The captain proved an old friend, and had already attacked Brady with some heat on the subject of his continued bachelorship—this seems a common grievance on the part of many of these masters, who seem to want the Mission carried on in the direct line.

"How about your firemen?" asked the canon after a time, a considerable amount of meaning in his voice.

The captain shook his head in a moment of emphatic gloom.

"The worst in the world. Hopeless! Never had such a bad lot before!"

Brady nodded gravely.

"I thought so," he said. "I recognised three or four. There was So-and-so, and So-and-so—about as tough a lot as you are likely to see anywhere!"

Now the strange part of the affair is that this particular steamer had not called in at Buenos Aires for some years, and, even so, the firemen were new to her stokehold. Where they had been before who could tell—except, perhaps, Canon Brady!

To see the canon in one of those moments when he is most popular with the general crowd, which includes Argentines as well as British, it is necessary to go to the boxing club that he has instituted in the centre of the city, and to watch him in a bout with whomsoever feels inclined to stand up to him with the gloves on. If he finds a man worthy of his mettle, there will be some clean and hard boxing, with a smile imprinted on the reverend gentleman's face far too broadly for any mere punch to remove.

"Parsons don't interest me much as a rule," confessed a British inhabitant of Buenos Aires, after watching a three-round contest between the canon and a large and efficient ship's officer, "but, after this—well, any subscription that Brady wants from me; he can have it!"

This boxing club, by the way, has now become an almost international affair, thanks to the efforts of the canon and of Mr. Millington Drake, the third secretary of the British Legation. Many of the

Argentines have taken to this particular form of recreation with no little enthusiasm. In their case the contests are apt to be of a rather more fiery order, as might be expected, but many of them have learned to go about the affair in quite a business-like fashion.

To every man his hobby. Some collect postage-stamps, others books; yet others breed pigeons, and so on. Brady's hobby is to gather up the very considerable amount of musical and dramatic talent in Buenos Aires, and to bring it to his Mission Hall, where he provides entertainments for his sailors and for their captains in the posts of honour in the front seats. This is no place for moralising, but when one scans the rows and rows of broadly grinning faces and listens to the shouts of appreciative laughter—and this in the centre of a town that abounds as thickly as the summer locust in temptations and traps for the seafarer—the excellence of the work can escape no one. Moreover, there is no obligation beyond that of reasonable behaviour. Brady knows his world too well not to choose suitable moments for the graver side of life.

Of course, not all British sailors are angels—not even all of those who have been carrying their lives in their hands during the war. They have their lapses—some of them—and these are accepted as a matter of course. On one occasion I was present at the Institute when Brady announced that there would be no billiards that evening.

“Someone has walked off with the balls,” he observed, in the kind of tone that might have been employed for a remark on the weather, “and someone else has pocketed the chalk.”



There was nothing more to be said. He was as imperturbable concerning this minor disaster as he was when, having desired to see what was happening on board an interned German ship, he found his visit cut short by an enforced plunge into the river. But this abrupt change of scene appeared to make very little odds to the canon, who swam placidly back to his boat.

Canon Brady has now received from his Government a most well-deserved honour. But, without this, his name in any case would have been indelibly associated with the Institute. Not that his work is in the least confined to that spot. It seems to be with him for every hour of his waking life. Lunch with him, and you will meet steamer captains and ship's officers. Go to see him at his rooms, and, as likely as not, you will find them occupied by cadets and other lads deep in the perusal of his books. And these rooms are literally papered with the photographs of boys and men in the uniform of the mercantile marine—just a few out of the countless number of his friends of the sea!

Perhaps I have given an extravagant amount of space to a single topic. But its importance surely does away with any need for an apology—except, perhaps, to the person most concerned. The conclusion of the matter in a nutshell is that, for the welfare of the British Empire, no port should be without its Brady!

We are admittedly a peculiarly constituted race. We have brought fair-play to so fine an art that it is generally expensive, as fine arts must ever be. Or rather, it is expensive in immediate results.

I am not at all certain that, like honesty, it does not prove financially profitable in the long run, however costly its immediate results may be. In wartime we gave up motors, and occasionally sacrificed our portions of margarine, when the Sir Philip Sydney act could not be done with unavoidably absent butter. We gave up a good deal more—some of us because we wished to, others because they had no choice. But we retained our sense of fair play. It was a birthright which no political pottage could lure away. We showed it to Hun and Hungarian, Turk and Bulgarian, and all the rest of them, and left them wondering greatly, but also resentfully admiring. This trait was at least as evident in South America as elsewhere. On reflection, there is no doubt that, were the British Empire to fall to pieces to-morrow, the world would lose much more than is supposed by most people, including the British! I am not at all certain that something of this has not been realised in the Southern Continent in the course of the past five years.

No doubt undue self-appreciation is a canker that eats into the very core of a nation. The British have seldom justly been charged with this infection. They are rather addicted, on the other hand, to a gentle depreciation of their own efforts and possessions, although it is true that this may be occasionally announced with a certain lack of complete conviction. But there is no denying the fact that England stood very high in the estimation of the South Americans in general during the war—and never more so than during the last few months of the struggle. There were certainly very few in the

Latin continent who did not go out of their way to express their appreciation of the vast effort and self-sacrifice that had been made by a nation that is not fond of advertising its labours in these directions.

The inhabitants of the River Plate Republics, at all events, had a certain amount of direct evidence upon which to judge in addition to the admirable cable services which kept them amply supplied with all the latest happenings. For one thing, they had seen the British among them answer the call, and lay down their pens, bridles, or surveying instruments as a matter of course, in order to perform a duty that, to put it in its most prosaic form, had no lucrative side! The heroism of the men was not lost on the people among whom they had dwelt, and I do not think that the honesty of the purpose was ever in doubt among the great bulk of the South American Latins when the first haze and confusion of the conflict had passed away.

There were other influences at work, too, almost as powerful in their way as these. Indeed, from the point of view of *morale*, England may be satisfied if she can maintain the position that she had won for herself—and had very honourably won—at the conclusion of hostilities. She can ask no more than this, since her worth was proved only at a cost that one prays she may never have to suffer again.

But the question of the day is: will she be able to maintain the position she has won? Or, if she maintain her moral supremacy, as she assuredly must do, will she continue to hold those material advantages, without which, in some senses, the former is apt to be lost to view? An out-at-elbows saint

is admirable and inspiring in theory, but he carries very little weight in the facts and figures of this hard and unsentimental world. In short, a nation cannot live on the admiration yielded by others to its spiritual qualities. Nor even on the comfortable conviction of being deserving of admiration, whether it be yielded or not !

The present-day commercial situation of Great Britain in South America is dealt with in the later chapters, but a short word on this subject will not be out of place here. It is clear that it will be necessary to organise British trade in this direction more elaborately than has ever been the case before, and that the distribution of British goods in this great field must be undertaken with a greater energy than has ever yet characterised their sale. It is no more possible to spur on the manufacturer who has no desire to go with the times than it is to urge a mule forward by leaning against its hind-quarters. But I do not think that there are many of these remaining—I am referring to ultra-conservative manufacturers, not to mules. The eyes of the great majority have been widely opened, and they seem perfectly prepared to play their part.

But there is need of an organised official assistance on a wider scale than at present exists. When capital and labour have finally settled their differences and fused their interests, the value of this could scarcely fail to become apparent. There are many, it is true, who have a prejudice against the interference of the State in directions such as these. But these could entertain no reasonable objection against an increase in the scope and the



powers of the various chambers of commerce, which would amount to much the same thing.

It is difficult to overrate the advantages of an intelligent system of propaganda—a propaganda for the whole, designed to leave the private interests entirely free, but which should be at hand to assist them whenever the need arises. There should be agents abroad whose duties should be concerned with nothing else. Assuredly they would not find time hang heavily on their hands. Surely there should be centres, too, where samples of every British industry might be on view—samples that should be renewed regularly and frequently.

It is not unreasonable to suppose that these centres would benefit a very large class. Those for instance, who had not had the opportunity or the necessary knowledge of local conditions to appoint agents of their own would be enabled to send specimens of their goods with the comforting knowledge that they would be seen by people really interested in their various uses. They should, in fact, represent permanent industrial exhibitions, in which the exhibits should never be allowed to grow stale.

After all, a commercial campaign of this kind need not prove itself unreasonably difficult nor unduly expensive to carry out. The nucleus of a new organisation such as this is already at hand. Some of the commercial attachés in South America have already shown a remarkable aptitude for their career, and not a few of the present-day consuls are pleasingly notable for both keenness and efficiency. The machinery is at hand. Nothing is

required beyond adding to the number of its wheels and enlarging its scope.

All this may sound unduly didactic. But it does indeed seem to me that the sooner some move of this kind is effected the better it will be for the trade of the country in general. And, as I have endeavoured to point out, the moment is in many respects a favourable one. Indeed, within the inevitable limitations of neutrality, nowhere was the might of England more strongly evident than in the distant Republics of the Rio de la Plata. This was especially the case in Argentina, where so many elements of the struggle were concentrated, where the British and the Americans worked loyally together, and the mutual support between the Legation and the Embassy was admirably rendered.

But it appeared that the appeal of the cosmopolitan world was mainly to the British as the tacitly acknowledged senior residents in the land. There are probably not many who realise the responsibilities placed on British communities dwelling in neutral countries—responsibilities that the command of the sea and the consequent control of many sources of supplies made all the more onerous. Many of the situations which arose, owing to this, would, of course, have been quite impossible in the ordinary times of peace.

“May I have some coal for my country’s ships?” a Minister of a neutral European State would ask, at a time when black diamonds approached nearer to their name in value than ever before.

“May I have some more paper for my publications?” a newspaper proprietor would demand,

when the intrinsic worth of mere scraps of paper was being brought home to one and all.

"So-and-so has been put on the Black List," a neutral consul from somewhere in the provinces would protest; "won't you reconsider his case? There may be extenuating circumstances."

And so on—absolutely *ad infinitum*.

There is no doubt, indeed, that the British community contrived to "hold its end up" in a time that was by no means devoid of considerable trials. How many of the satisfactory results that were achieved were due to the British Minister, Sir Reginald Tower, will probably never be known. At all events, it seems to me that it would be difficult to acknowledge fully the ceaseless efforts, the tireless work, and the endless patience that he brought to bear during nearly twelve hours of each day on the mass of intricate problems that welled up as thick as clouds in a February sky.

But who am I to attempt such testimonials as these—even though they be evoked by an unusually high display of conscientious ability? Let it suffice to say that it was a time when every British subject in the whole of South America was a consul, when consuls were kings and Ministers were emperors! It was a period not without its heart-burnings, for these are presumably inseparable from responsibility. And it must be put to the credit of the British community in Argentina that there were very few of its members who took their responsibilities lightly.

## CHAPTER VII

### ARGENTINA'S POLITICAL PROSPECTS

It is surely clear enough that the foreign politics of a country are more often influenced by its own internal affairs than by a change of sentiment on the part of its inhabitants towards those of another State. This, at least, must be the case in new countries, such as Argentina, the recent history of which shows a remarkable series of evolutions, and the foreign politics of which are far more concerned with tariffs than with frontiers.

Thus a century ago the young State was still red-hot from her efforts towards the cause of national liberty, and the great military deeds of San Martin, her principal hero, were only in the act of being made to yield their political and social fruits by such statesmen as Belgrano, Rivadavia, and their colleagues of the early nineteenth century.

Fifty years ago the nation was recovering from a further period of trial and disillusion, which came in the train of civil war, the various despotic *caudillo* Governments, and the confusion of a host of warring interests which had split up the State into a dozen separate fields of anarchy.

Twenty-five years ago the Argentines, having abandoned revolutions in favour of prosperity, were beginning to draw their first gigantic draughts of



real and refreshing financial fruit from the land. Over the vast estancias galloped the Gauchos, still hot with anger against the continually spreading ramifications of the wire-fencing that impeded their freedom of the *Campo*, but still children of nature imbued with a curious spirit of voluntary feudalism that left them profoundly unconcerned with such mere details as those of wages and the like.

To-day, the big estates have in almost every province suffered the fate with which great properties are wont to meet in the lands of rising populations and prices. Split up into lesser holdings, though many of these are still vast, they no longer know the old-time Gaucho. His successor works cheek by jowl now with a mixed population of agriculturists, many of them *gringos*, whose peaceable throats would scarcely have been worth an hour's purchase in the middle of the nineteenth century. As for the great landowner himself, though his social importance remains as marked as ever, his direct political influence has decayed to a certain extent. Just as in the "Camp" the sight of the *asado* smoke going up to the blue heavens from the little-valued roasting ox has given way to that of threshing-machines and motor-tractors, so in congress the placid local questions of land and concessions has yielded in importance to disputes concerning the rights and wrongs of labour and other involved questions of the kind.

Now it is clear that each of these different periods has produced a different type of inhabitants, whose views have varied more or less widely from those of their predecessors or successors. The first two

phases were those of purely internal struggle, relieved by some minor international episodes and conflicts when there was occasion for intervention from abroad. The third was one of practically unalloyed prosperity, a purely commercial era, during which the capitalist played a great part, and received a most generous return for his services. The fourth period shows the sources of Argentine prosperity, not only maintained, but very greatly increased, both in scope and wealth. But the method of the distribution of the gains is no longer allowed to pass unchallenged. To the honey of a potential wealth greater than ever before has been added the vinegar of what it is the fashion to term labour unrest.

It would be strange, indeed, had the foreign politics of the Republic remained the same during these four different periods. More especially, as has already been remarked, since in the case of Argentina foreign affairs have, with one or two rare exceptions, been confined to questions of commerce. In order, therefore, to understand the point of view from which the Republic regards the outer world, it is necessary to take into full account the condition of her internal concerns.

Judged merely from the material point of view of production and demand, Argentina's immediate future would, humanly speaking, seem assured. Possessing very large stocks of those foodstuffs of which the Old World is urgently in need, the Republic suffers no anxiety concerning its commercial prospects. In many respects, indeed, Argentina stands in the forefront of that group of Western

nations to whom the smoke of the European war has blown great breaths of added prosperity.

The political situation of the country, on the other hand, is by no means so clear. Here, it is difficult to speak with any assurance at all as to what may arise.

There is to-day a curious difference between the ethics of political and of social Argentina. The question which at the present moment is violently agitating large sections of the educated classes of the Republic is: to what extent do its authorities reflect the opinion of the general public? There is nothing unique in this situation, it is true, for it appears to be prevalent in many countries to-day. It is now sixty-six years since Argentina was ruled by its dictator Rosas, whom history has accurately handed down as the last of the old-fashioned type of autocrat that at one period was typical of that portion of South America. Making allowance for the present-day conditions of enlightenment and freedom, the modern chief of state who, in the matter of actual power, has approached most nearly to Rosas is Doctor Irigoyen, who now occupies the presidential seat.

In some respects the comparison may seem a dangerous one. But it is probably unnecessary to explain even to those ignorant of River Plate affairs that the President's authority has been achieved by no such red-handed methods as those by means of which Rosas won his way to power and retained it. Any such supposition would be supremely ridiculous. It seems clear that the ideals of the Argentina head of state are essentially pacific.

Indeed, they are classed by many of his opponents as Utopian.

The personality of Doctor Irigoyen is elusive. He is, to a certain degree, a man of mystery, not only to the foreign diplomats who from time to time enjoy brief interviews with him, but to the Argentines in general, and even to a considerable degree to the members of his own entourage. Of provincial upbringing and credited with far less cosmopolitan views than those of his predecessors, he is the first presidential product of that New Argentina that forced its masses by decree to the poll, which, until then, had been almost exclusively manipulated by the leading and aristocratic families of the Republic. Thus, Argentina has arrived at a situation which, in theory, should be ideal.

Elected by the popular vote, secured by what was frankly an alluring appeal to the masses, the President's sentiments and personality would seem honestly democratic, and his retiring mode of life in the humble and private abode he has chosen offer a curious contrast to the customs of his more socially exigent predecessors. For all that, his character has shown itself to be essentially masterful, and many of his traits form the subject of interminable puzzled speculation and argument on the part of the Argentines. Thus, where he is applauded by some for strength of purpose, he is decried by others on account of what they allege to be mere obstinacy and narrowmindedness, blended with a number of Gauchoesque and reactionary characteristics. It must be understood, of course, that I am now merely referring to the various shades of



popular opinion which must necessarily take strong views either way concerning so interesting a character.

Whatever the actual facts may be, it is clear that the President of Argentina is no mere figurehead. He is more than the most salient personality in the Republic. During the period of the war the politics of the nation have been to all intents and purposes centred within himself. In one sense he has been Argentina incarnate, or, more correctly, he has stood for his own interpretation of Argentina thus condensed. Almost the one topic about which all political talk surges, he is a rock upon which his opponents have up to the present broken themselves in vain. There seems not the faintest doubt that but for President Irigoyen Argentina would have entered the war on the side of the Allies. It is no exaggeration to say that 90 per cent. of the educated classes were completely in favour of this step—or, at all events, they have so expressed themselves. The feeling of the people may be gauged from the fact that the single representative of the Chamber of Deputies who voted against the rupture of relations with Germany was shunned by the entire community of that almost national institution, the Jockey Club of Buenos Aires. Indeed, so far as the general public was concerned, the neutrality of Argentina was benevolent to the extent of approaching an unofficial alliance. “*We have won another victory!*” the great majority of Argentines were given to exclaim when good news came through from one of the various fronts. This note, which I have previously emphasised, gave the key to much

of the situation. There have even been occasions when Cabinet Ministers themselves have headed anti-German demonstrations, notably on the sinking of the Argentine vessel *Monte Protegido*.

But on the other side—that is to say, on the side of aloofness—has been Irigoyen, the President, who has been the despair of the Allied Ministers and Chargés d’Affaires. His consistency has extorted an unwilling admiration even from his political opponents. He has remained silent and utterly immutable, although that marked charm of personality, which is one of his characteristics, has from time to time given rise to fleeting hopes of a change of policy. His power of influencing others, indeed, seems quite remarkable. Over and over again an embittered opponent has obtained an interview with him in order to speak his mind, and—within respectful limits—pour the vials of his party’s wrath upon the head of the State. But on each occasion the entering lion has emerged a lamb—feeling for several hours afterwards that, after all, there was a good deal to be said on the other side.

The regularity with which this sort of thing has occurred is remarkable. Any attempt at successful controversy with the President apparently can only be carried on at long range. It has been a very open secret in diplomatic circles that an attempt to sway the nation was futile so long as the President chose to maintain his uncompromising attitude.

It was inevitable that Doctor Irigoyen, in view of his attitude, should have been accused of pro-German views. But, although there are one or two

circumstances which might seem to give colour to this theory, it seems very doubtful whether he has been swayed by any actual Germanophile sympathies. Those who know him best are given to maintain that his actions are the result of a profound conviction that the interests of Argentina were best served by neutrality. His policy, according to these, has been merely pro-Argentine, according to his views. In any case, it is certain—and who can blame him for it?—that his chief interests are centred on the problems of his immediate surroundings in South America, rather than on the affairs of the remoter nations. This was peculiarly evident on the recent visit of the Chilean special embassy to Buenos Aires when the President, who can never be accused of having lavished an undue amount of his time on European or North American missions of the kind, exerted himself to pay honour to the guests of his nation to a degree unusual enough to cause amazement among those who knew him.

According to this theory, no doubt, a week of revolution, say, in Paraguay, is of more direct importance to the neighbouring Republic than four years of war throughout distant Europe. There may be something in the principle, which, at all events, will not bear ridicule, although it leaves many of the more comprehensive of the world's issues out in the cold.

Lauded for his firmness by his admirers, condemned for his obstinacy by his detractors, there is no doubt that the personality of Doctor Irigoyen is exceptionally forceful. The most salient proof of this is surely that no man of mediocre force could

have succeeded in keeping Argentina out of the war. Until now he has brooked no opposition whatever. He appears to possess the power both of conciliation and repression to an unusual degree. Cabinet Ministers, finding themselves opposed to a new development of the presidential policy, have definitely resigned, say, on Wednesday. In the evening there has been a conference between the ex-Minister and the Chief of the State, and at mid-day on Thursday the news startles every quarter of astounded Buenos Aires that the Minister has emerged from his fleeting retirement, and has resumed charge of his Portfolio.

When the views of any of the provincial governors have differed from the President's, it is seldom that a prolonged interchange of opinions has followed. His methods have been curt and simple. An "Interventor" has been despatched from Buenos Aires to the troublesome local capital, and the inconvenient governor would find himself deprived of his power, or, at all events, of his initiative. Each instance of the kind—and they have been sufficiently numerous—has been accompanied by a storm of protest from the press, and an outcry on the part of the public. But Irigoyen has continued his procedure with an unruffled determination.

Within the last few months, however, some fresh factors have entered into the situation. When it became realised that the end of the war was approaching (although, of course, not even the most ardent Argentine *pro-aliado* had any presentiment concerning the suddenness of its actual end), and that Argentina was still browsing in the cold, if financially



profitable, field of neutrality, there came a feeling of dismay, more especially to the intellectual classes. The warmest advocates of warlike intervention realised that it was then too late, and that an entry of the Republic into the struggle at the eleventh hour would cause the real motives to be misinterpreted in a sordid and predatory light. Resentment ran high among many sections of the people, and the signing of the armistice was marked for the first time during President Irigoyen's term of office by something in the nature of disapproving public demonstrations in Buenos Aires. Added to this there have recently been serious symptoms of splits in the President's own party, which it has doubtless taxed all the President's noted force of personality to overcome.

Nevertheless, in the light of what has happened in the past, nothing could be more difficult than to attempt to forecast the trend of public opinion concerning President Irigoyen. Our own recent history reveals some staggering changes in the contemporary verdicts concerning statesmen. At the present moment it seems impossible to glean any reasonably accurate idea as to whether Argentina's chief citizen will go down to history as a powerful political problem, or as a really great man.

As it is, Argentina is regarding the political world with a frank anxiety. She is somewhat anxiously awaiting the verdict of history. Nine out of ten of the people with whom one is brought into contact in the normal course of affairs are acutely anxious that their sentiments, although they have never found official expression, should not be misunder-

stood. Some of the extremists among these are given openly to lament that Argentina has lost her official soul, and to ask whether the Republic is to be judged by its public sentiment—that throughout has been enthusiastically supported by the important organs of the press—or by its official attitude.

There are others, less despairing, cynics perhaps by comparison with the former, who maintain that the present position of the country is one which offers many advantages, and that nothing beyond this should be taken into consideration. From the purely material point of view there may be considerable commonsense in this attitude, but decidedly it will go very little way towards reassuring that very large number of Argentines who bitterly resent the failure of their Republic to enter the war, and to whom the official attitude of the State comes in the light of a genuine and deep grief.

Such moments as these, however, are necessarily transient in the history of nations, and in connection with these, and, indeed, with most of the theories expressed in this book, it must not be forgotten that they are expressed under conditions which are still heavily charged with the atmosphere of hostility. How long these will continue, whatever treaties may be drawn up, and whatever amends may be made, is a matter about which it is clearly impossible to venture the faintest shadow of an opinion. But it is perfectly certain, in any case, that they will die away in those neutral States remote from Europe long before they lose their hold elsewhere.

The point of view of neutral countries in this

respect, and especially of the South American Republics, must be of considerable concern to the people of the Allies. It would be unprofitable to nourish any delusions concerning their future attitude. At the present moment Great Britain and those who fought at her side enjoy the advantages in *morale* of victors. A vast number of South Americans have burned with indignation at the policy of the Central Powers, and at the methods of warfare they employed. These have openly rejoiced at the manner in which the struggle terminated.

At the same time it must be remembered that their anger was concerned rather with principles than with any direct wrongs inflicted upon themselves—although in some isolated cases these have not been lacking. Their populace cannot burn with that profound resentment that has flamed through the masses in the belligerent countries, whose relatives have helped to swell the toll of blood. No doubt the unpopularity of the Germans will continue for a time in those quarters of the southern Republics where it now obtains. But I would not mind wagering that in a couple of years from now there will not be enough of the sentiment remaining in the average merchant, professional man, or landowner, to interfere in any way with any commercial dealings that may chance to offer themselves.

Indeed, it would be strange were it otherwise. The belligerent, hot in his cause, experiences a natural difficulty in understanding the reluctance of the neutral to run side by side with him for the entire length of his course. He certainly will never

do this unless he endeavours to imagine himself within the skin of the neutral, who will ask, "Why should I continue to boycott the goods of those with whom I have never had an official quarrel, and with whom you yourselves are now ostensibly at peace?"

Logic of this kind will be difficult to contest. It is extremely unlikely that anyone will be foolish to attempt it. In any case it would appear that the energy which might be expended on any bitterness on this score would be more profitably employed in the practical furtherance of the British interests in the Latin continent.

Indeed, turning for a moment to the strictly commercial standpoint, there is no doubt that in some of these States the boot may find itself on the other leg. As I am endeavouring to point out elsewhere in this book, it is useless to disguise the fact that the control of the commerce, absolutely essential though it was to the interests of three-quarters of the globe, could not fail to introduce a certain element of antagonism—which must not be confused with enmity—on the part of those who found their operations occasionally hampered by the regulations. It is true that the difficult omelette of international trade security was made at the expense of the fewest possible number of broken eggs. But this was not fully appreciated by those whose particular eggs had to be broken for the purpose.

As a matter of fact, the circumstances of the war seem to have revealed their industrial and commercial power to the River Plate States, and to Argentina in



particular. They realise that Europe now counts on them for supplies to a greater extent than ever before. There is no doubt whatever that they will do their best to take advantage of this situation, and I suppose that no one can blame them for making the most of their opportunity.

"We begin afresh from this time onwards," said a very prominent journalist in the course of a conversation. "We must be treated as a maiden, whose hand and heart are free, and who is prepared to welcome attentions—and to accept the best offer!"

Perhaps he had forgotten for the moment that there were other maidens, nearer home, from the point of view of British sentiment, although not necessarily so from their geographical situation. But that is by the way. The words of the journalist were very apt. He had put the situation into a nutshell. But, after all, it contains no elements which need dismay the leaders of British enterprise, who should be in a position to offer just precisely that which Argentina would accept.

## CHAPTER VIII

### INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

ON the whole, the average South American is a very sane person, and it stands to reason that his statesmen do not differ from the general populace in this respect. Perhaps it is easy to be sane in a continent where every nation owns more land than it has been enabled to populate in anything like an adequate fashion up to the present time, than in areas that are humanly congested. Nevertheless, this fact alone has not sufficed to prevent wars and invasions, even when the rare specimens of humanity crouched in their few caves. There were always better lands, where the edible mammoth abounded, and the unpleasant sabre-toothed tiger seldom trod. The only difference to-day is in the extension of the field of needs.

So if methods of reason and conciliation have played a leading part in South American international politics, there is no reason why the Republics concerned should be deprived of the credit for them. It is true that revolutions and civil wars have, in the past, been amazingly frequent in a number of these countries. Indeed, some three-quarters of a century ago they seemed to serve as expensive but efficient substitutes for general elections, when each candidate went to the poll

at the head of his troops, and scattered bullets instead of votes. There was one period, indeed, when it was no uncommon thing for a chaotic Republic to own some dozen different Presidents or Dictators in the course of a year. But this is now quite ancient history.

On the other hand, international struggles of a serious order have been of extremely rare occurrence, more especially among the eastern Republics. And here it cannot be said that the sentiment of racial antagonism—or, at least, of rivalry—has been entirely absent. In the colonial era lengthy and bitter struggles occurred between the Spaniards and the Portuguese for the possession of the areas across which the debatable frontiers of the two hesitated, and fluctuated. This particular species of warfare continued at intervals for some time after each of the States concerned had obtained its own form of self-government, but in the end completely died away.

It is true that the greatest war that independent South America has known affected all the East Coast countries of the continent. In many respects, as I have pointed out elsewhere, this contest curiously resembled the great struggle which has just been victoriously concluded. It was brought about by the militant ambitions of Francisco Solano Lopez, the Dictator of Paraguay, a man who took Buonaparte for his hero and who longed for the day when he might take rank as the South American counterpart of the conqueror of the early nineteenth century. Spurred on by these fiery dreams, he made a most formidable military power of Paraguay by

completely merciless methods which took into no account whatever the life and property of his own people. The storm, when it burst, was met by an alliance of Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, who had become alive to the danger, and who, after an appallingly fierce contest, succeeded in defeating the stubborn armies of the Inland Republic.

This war ended in 1869, and since that time no other struggle has disturbed the international peace of these regions of South America. The situation is all the more satisfactory, since it cannot be said that no difficult questions have arisen in the interval to disturb the minds of the various Foreign Offices. But extreme care has been taken to avoid friction on every occasion that bade fair to give rise to that undesirable element, and it is abundantly clear that the respective statesmen have achieved excellent results during their periodical conferences, when each has made an honest and intelligent endeavour to see the other's point of view, as, of course, has been proved by the results.

There would seem no reason to anticipate a departure from this procedure, and from a continuance of the half-century of peace which is due to it. At the same time it cannot be said that the international situation of the eastern Republics is quite so assured as it has been for some time. There have been certain dislocations in the old and accepted status—the fruits of the world-wide influences of the European war. In the past the alliance between Argentina, Brazil, and Chile—popularly known as the A.B.C. Alliance—definitely assured the peace of three-quarters of the continent. The fact of



Brazil joining the Allies, and of the maintaining of neutrality by the other two signatories to the A.B.C. treaty, could not fail to produce an element disturbing to the original plan, since both Argentina and Chile now lacked the wider interests and responsibilities which Brazil had assumed.

No doubt this affected the public mind in these countries far more powerfully than it did those who were in a position responsible for the conduct of affairs. Certainly, when Brazil first took up her burden in the war, there was evidence of considerable nervousness among sections of the populace of Argentina. Their discussions assumed an anxious and sombre tone. Was Brazil about to take advantage of her powerful position to invade the northern bank of the Rio de la Plata—the district that had been the cause of so many wars in the distant past? This was the query put by quite a number of people—a popular cry that undoubtedly showed even less reasoning than the majority of these theoretical breaths of rumour that from time to time are wont to blow across a nation.

Then, again, there were other local authorities of a very slender order, who were given to explain in an astonishing fashion Brazil's connection with Argentina's reluctance to enter the war. According to these, the fault lay with Brazil, for the simple reason that she, without having sufficiently consulted her neighbours' wishes, had acted first, and that, it being incompatible with Argentina's dignity tamely to follow the lead of her ancient rival, she had been left no choice but to remain passive!

It was a curious feat in popular logic. Needless to

say, it did not emanate from any authoritative sources. Indeed, these rumours and heart-burnings of the populace are only given for what they are worth, since the cries of the general and irresponsible mass of the people, however wide of the mark they may be, are always interesting, and are occasionally not without their ultimate effect on the more thoughtful and better informed sections of a nation, much in the same way as a sufficient number of drops of water will end by wearing a stone.

For all that, there is no denying the fact that the war has had a disturbing effect on these Republics. The smell of powder from the sea has floated over both the east and west coasts of the continent, and, like Bolshevism, a state of belligerency is a catching disease. It could not well fail to turn the thoughts of their inhabitants to the subject of frontiers and of international rights and wrongs. When history has revealed the full details of the recent crisis between Chile and Peru, it will probably be seen that European affairs had a deeper influence on the difficult situation that arose than is at present suspected.

A question of some interest arises as regards this last point. But I have written at such length in other places on the mischievous influence that has been exercised by the German—or, if you will, Prussian—military training that has been adopted by some of the South American armies, that I will merely refer to the subject in passing here. No pains were spared by the Potsdam authorities in showing their representatives in the very best light. There are very few people sufficiently in-

genuous not to be acquainted with the fruiterer's trick when selling strawberries. The best are on top—the others are out of sight. From the point of view of diplomatic ability, this was the policy employed by the Germans in the delectation of the officers destined to train the South American armies on the spot.

For the same reason an elaborate system of courtesies was extended to those South American officers who visited Germany for the purpose of concluding their military training there. This, of course, was in a sense included in the regulations, and in course of time became part of the routine work of the much interested hosts. But that this produced its effect on the visitors was confided to me by an Argentine officer, who frankly confessed to a weakness for his former Prussian colleagues.

“How could one dislike them,” he explained, “when the treatment accorded to the visitor was the essence of comradeship. They made me one of themselves. They saw to it that one joined in their gaiety—and there was much of it. It was ‘comrade’ here, ‘comrade’ there—they were jolly fellows, who insisted on their guests being jolly too. Yes,” he concluded rather defiantly, “to me they were *simpatico*. One takes people as one finds them, and it would be ingratitude on my part to say otherwise.”

Yet this man's leanings were towards the policy of the Entente. There is undoubtedly a useful object-lesson in this. It is evident that courtesy—strictly to order and with a well-defined object in view—can be used as much in the sense of a weapon as a bomb, or a dose of poison gas !

It will be interesting to watch the development of these South American armies that in the past have been Prussian trained. It does not require a very shrewd prophet to foresee an alteration in their theories and ideals. If uniform be any test, this has already occurred to a certain extent, judging by the uniforms of one or two of the Chilean officers, out of the many who accompanied the Chilean Mission to Argentina at the end of 1918. These wore a pattern of khaki that strongly resembled that of the United States troops.

In Argentina these first symptoms of a coming change had not yet showed themselves, and in the course of the war the aspect of the Argentine officers in Prussian uniform, and with *pickelhaube* headgear, came a something of a shock to those visitors who had not had any previous experience of this. But such matters as these, after all, are not the affair of the foreigner. It is not his part to instruct others as to what clothes they should wear—he must confine himself to the hope that fashions will change.

There is no doubt that the two districts in South America from which the Germans hoped to derive the greatest assistance to the triumphant carrying out of the programme they had mapped for themselves were southern Chile and southern Brazil. Both these neighbourhoods are populated in part by large German communities, who, although they have for the most part been long established there, have retained their native speech, have founded their own schools, and have preserved many of the habits and customs of their native country.

With the affairs of southern Chile we are not at



present concerned. But in both cases it is clear that the officials in Berlin were disappointed in the results they had hoped for. Perhaps, seeing that practical psychology is not the Prussian's strong point, they had left out of consideration the effect of more than half a century's residence abroad on communities that had left their own country from motives of dissatisfaction, although no doubt there were firebrands in plenty among their inhabitants.

In any case nothing definite occurred, although it is not to be denied that these communities provided a continual source of anxiety. The submarine is an unsettling engine of war, and nowhere more so than on long stretches of lonely coast, where a base might be established with the utmost ease, and no one be the wiser, until the craft had begun its nefarious work. One of the popular bogies took the shape of a submarine raid from one of these concealed and remote spots.

The thing, as a matter of fact, was by no means outside the bounds of possibility, and since it was clearly impossible for the Brazilian fleet to patrol every inlet of the enormous coastline, the British authorities offered their assistance and one or two naval men spent many long months steaming in and out of the innumerable indentations that are characteristic of so many stretches of this shore. This alone will give some idea of the tremendous and world-wide nature of the task with which the British successfully coped. Truly, the Grand Fleet had many offsprings, innumerable chicks that went to and fro in every part of the globe in readiness to snap up any pestilential insects that might reveal their unwelcome presence.

On the whole it seems strange, not that the Germans achieved as much as they did in furthering their cause in the Latin continent, but that they did not bring about wider results. From the military point of view, they may have succeeded in giving some information to their compatriots, whether by wireless or other means. But this was scarcely an adequate return for the millions of money that had been spent in the furthering the ambitious Prussian policy in the continent from which, outside Europe, they had entertained the greatest hopes.

The influence of religion is undoubtedly one which has played an important part in the war. Naturally enough this has not been without its effect on South America, where it was generally understood that the policy of the Vatican was favourable to Austria, and thus to the Allies of that country as well. Nevertheless, any moral pressure that might have been exerted on the Roman Catholic Republics of the South met with a comparatively faint response. It did not prevent Brazil, whose people are probably more under the influence of the priests than those of the neighbouring Spanish-speaking countries, from declaring war on Germany; nor did the fact of Uruguay possessing a German for one of its highest church dignitaries stand in the way of that country breaking off its relations with the Central Powers.

In Argentina it was considered that the attitude of the generality of the priesthood was not in favour of the Allied cause; but here again, as has already been seen, this tendency—to whatever actual extent it may have existed—went a very short way towards

the moulding of public opinion. In connection with this it may be said that the question of religious training presents some very interesting problems in Argentina just now. The chief centre of this is the town of Córdoba, whose university is one of the oldest in South America, having been founded by the Jesuits in the sixteenth century. Of late years considerable dissension has arisen here concerning the educational policy of the institution, one party being in favour of continuing the old-fashioned régime, the other clamouring ardently for reform. So heated did the dispute become in 1918 that the students resorted to open force, the university buildings were held first by one side and then by the other. In the end a deadlock arose which caused the President to send more than one official to intervene in the contention.

The upshot does not seem even now to be finally decided, but it is probable that not a few alterations will ultimately be brought about in the constitution of the university. Yet it does not appear likely that the atmosphere of confusion will be entirely solved for some time. As a matter of fact, apart from the more subtle problems involved, there is room for several alterations in the practical working of the universities, both of Córdoba and Buenos Aires—if only in the matter of the professorships, which, in the opinion of the majority, are not sufficiently securely held, the holders of these chairs being liable to be changed with undue frequency more or less at the whim of officials who need not necessarily be intimately connected with the institutions.

There are no doubt many who still retain the

impression that the rule of the priesthood in the eastern Republics of the continent is arbitrary and all-powerful. This, to-day, it must be repeated, must be regarded as a myth. It is true that the tendency towards agnosticism has not yet reached that pitch to which it has attained in some of the Latin countries of Europe, most especially, perhaps, in Portugal. Nevertheless, this movement has been strongly marked, and the temporal power of the Church has undoubtedly suffered a great decline in the far south, where the influences of religion now play a very minor part in such affairs as those of home or foreign politics.

The Monroe Doctrine is just at present of peculiar interest to the people of three or four continents. It is a peculiarly healthy child, this, in the way of doctrines, since the centenary of its birth will occur in 1923, four years from now, and, like the cheery old buck who illustrates the advertisements of a certain whisky, it is still "going strong." It was uttered at a time when many of the dynasties of Europe were regarding with considerable unease the happenings in South America and were wondering to what extent the all-conquering waves of Republicanism were about to spread, and, in short, whether it was worth their while to intervene, and to strangle this inconvenient young octopus of democracy before its tentacles spread too far.

It is a matter of common history that it was England who, of all nations outside South America, played the chief part in hatching out this very youthful octopus, which was so dreaded by certain of the Powers of Europe. It is equally clear that



England has never had cause to regret her action. Her policy at the time, therefore, was very much in accordance with President James Monroe's proclamation that "the United States" could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them (the new South American Republics), or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European Power, in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States."

During the century that has intervened much has happened. There have been innumerable evolutions along the roads of science, such as those which produced coaches-in-four, broughams, motor-cars, and aeroplanes; candles, lamps, gas, electric lights; high waists, crinolines, bustles, hobble-skirts; autocracy, liberalism, democracy, and King Labour—and, in fact, all the rest of it. Frontiers have come and gone; nations have risen and died; the Red Indian has become a contemporary of the mammoth; the United States is now supervising the politics of Europe, but Monroe's resolute old milestone still stands !

But I doubt whether the legend it bears is quite the same as formerly. There is nothing like a swelling of populations and towns to alter mileage ! It has been necessary, in fact, to construct as many interpretations of the Monroe Doctrine as have been demanded by the various periods in which it has found itself surviving. It resembles an old inn, bearing the original sign, but with its interior fitted with electric bells, bathrooms, and telephones. There are probably comparatively few persons who remember to-day that the Doctrine was in-

tended as a safeguard interposed by a State whose sap of independence had only recently begun to climb, between the youngest nations of their time, still panting and exhausted from their struggle, and the possibility of European aggression.

The Monroe Doctrine was laid down as a definite barrier to separate the politics of the Old World from those of the New, in the days when the ultimate success of Bolivar and San Martin was not yet fully assured. Since then it has remained in a strategic position in the background to watch the amazing career of the southern Republics, and the transition of so many of their chief towns from a condition of few and lowly mud houses, and unpaved, unlit, and undrained streets, to an ultra modern splendour of wide boulevards, brilliant illumination, and every other imposing attribute of the kind, while in one of these centres the pioneer skyscrapers have already begun to soar and the first tubes to burrow.

The attitude of the South American Republics themselves towards the Monroe Doctrine is somewhat complicated. No doubt they realise that a proper amount of gratitude is regarded as being due from them to the powerful northern State for the original act. But in international politics the period of gratitude is strictly limited. Many of the Latin American statesmen, as a matter of fact, are given to deny that there is actual reason for this, since, as they protest, the policy was initiated as much for the protection of the United States as for that of its Latin neighbours. No doubt there is something in this theory.

From time to time the weaker States of the Latin have made an appeal to the famous doctrine, but I think only for reasons which were convenient to their finances at the time. As for the more powerful nations, there is no doubt that they have for some time viewed it with some degree of embarrassment. Rightly or wrongly, they are apt to regard it as reminding them too much of the days when, as countries, they wore knickerbockers, and, as a refusal to acknowledge the fact, that they have grown up into trousers! The young man who as a child has been preserved from the attack of a bully is a little apt to resent being told by his onetime saviour that he must marry Jane and not Mary!

Notwithstanding all this, there is no doubt that the Monroe Doctrine has, on the whole, stood for the good of the world. This may be freely acknowledged by England, whose fundamental principles can have no quarrel with any tenets of the sort. Not every nation has stood in this position. Never, for instance, has the Doctrine been in greater danger of being put to the actual test than during this present century, when the German aggressive ambitions with regard to some of the richest South American lands were ripening at so rapid a pace. But for this warning shadow in the background there is no doubt that the speed of the German policy would have been considerably accelerated, and that the international complications in South America would have become as acute in their way as those in Asia and Africa.

At the present moment the Monroe Doctrine stands at the parting of the ways. In all probability

a few more weeks or months will decide whether it is to continue or lapse. It is perfectly true that, in its character of a barrier, it cannot exist contemporaneously with the League of Nations, the first principle of which is to level to the ground every obstacle of the sort. In this case no genuine compromise can occur. In view of the fact that both theories have their home in the United States, the contest between the two cannot fail to be peculiarly interesting.

The topic of the influences which have been brought to bear on the Spanish-speaking Republics of the South would be quite incomplete without some reference to Spain itself, the mother country of these new lands. On the surface, there has been very little connection between Spain and her one-time colonies for many generations, since the time, in fact, of the War of Independence. It is true that the number of Spanish immigrants, more especially into Argentina, has grown very large. But the modern Argentine, on the other hand, when he visits Europe, very seldom troubles to leave his card on the land whence his ancestors sprang. Madrid is strange ground to him, and Cervantes leaves him cool.

In this respect the tastes of the inhabitants of the Rio de la Plata Republics and those of the North Americans differ radically. For the former Spain holds no Westminster Abbey, Stratford-on-Avon, or Old Cheshire Cheese. In his eyes Paris, London, and Cannes are worth a dozen Alhambras. His enthusiastic modernism leaves him little time for the monuments of the past, and he would far rather



lose ten thousand dollars at a good, stirring game of baccarat than employ the hour or so necessary for that occupation in lolling aimlessly about among the treasures of Seville.

Externally, in fact, he seemed to have very little use for Spain, to the customs of which country it was the custom to refer in terms of sorrowful but casual pity—that in many respects were perhaps not altogether unjustified. But it seems that, however deeply veiled it may have been, a certain sentimental affection has always continued between the two. This came to the surface in a somewhat unexpected fashion during the war between Spain and the United States, when the resentment at the turn of affairs on the part of such large number of South Americans flared up in a manner that was scarcely to have been anticipated. It became evident again in the cordial reception accorded by the people of Buenos Aires to a member of the Spanish royal family on the occasion of her visit to that city at the time of the Centenary celebrations.

There were some interesting symptoms of the kind towards the end of the recent war, when it seemed possible that Spain, casting her long doubts to the winds, would come into the struggle on the side of the Allies. At this period the excitement which reigned in many of the large centres, but more especially Buenos Aires, was intense. For some days the matter was the subject of enthusiastic discussion. There is no more outspoken person than the intelligent Argentine when he is on a subject that is near to his heart, and as regards this there appeared to be no differences of opinion.

It seemed the unanimous opinion that, had Spain acted, her example would have been followed by the more important South American States that had remained neutral.

Of course, the struggle was all but over, and in the end nothing occurred. Nevertheless it seems clear that, had matters developed in a more active direction, Spain would have shone as the head of a comet with a very brilliant and lengthy tail ! There seemed to be an urgent desire that she should. But she did not, and there the matter ended.

The manner in which the news of the armistice was received must have afforded a death-blow to the hopes of that small remnant of even of the Central European adherents, who still nourished some delusions concerning the genuineness of the attitude of the inhabitants of the Republics of the east coast. In Brazil it was only to be expected that tumultuous demonstrations would occur, and in this respect it may be said that no one was disappointed.

It is on such occasions as these that one resents most bitterly of all that inconvenient human limitation which prevents a person from being in more than one place at the same time. From a personal experience of the celebrations at Rio, however, it is safe to say that no more enthusiastic testimonies of public rejoicings could have been given. From the strictly local point of view there was very little at which to rejoice at the period when the news from Europe arrived. The city was only just recovering from the worst effects of an appalling epidemic of influenza which had turned it almost into a city of the dead, and which was still claiming

a very grim death-roll. There were no two opinions about the scourge in Rio: by the universal consent of the oldest inhabitants it was the most bitter and mournful experience that the beautiful capital had ever undergone, dwarfing entirely the worst calamities of the old days, when yellow fever still raged and ravaged.

Nevertheless, when the tidings of victory arrived, the city flung off its gloom in a quite incredible fashion. The streets blossomed into gardens of bunting, and became centres of carnival, thronged with rejoicing crowds, through which companies of decorated motor-cars cautiously made their way. Military bands, speeches at street corners, frequent gusts of cheers, an extraordinary multitude of joyful demonstrations of every kind—it was amid scenes such as this that the dreadful epidemic perished, and was forgotten before it had died away!

Montevideo, it appears, showed an equal enthusiasm, and from all accounts Buenos Aires showed itself most resolutely determined not to be left behind in an appreciation of an event which nine-tenths of its people had ardently desired. From what one gathers, indeed, it seems quite possible that the demonstrations here were of an even more exuberant order than anywhere else, and, from my own knowledge of the place, I can think of quite a small army of British residents there who would have perished miserably rather than permit the lack of a very full measure of justice to the occasion!

There is no doubt whatever that they were very remarkable and spontaneous demonstrations, these. From the historical point of view they are by no

means without their value, for the rejoicings were on a scale which set the seal on the sentiment of the people themselves, who for the first time since the outbreak of hostilities found an occasion to give adequate vent to it.

We may turn briefly to another side of Argentina's relations with other countries, one which has no connection with the circumstances of the war. This is the relation in which this Republic and its neighbours stand towards our own cattle-raising and grain-producing Dominions. It is clear that the two sets of countries, producing so much in common, have certain rival claims. A New Zealander from the Canterbury Plains, or a Southern Australian, may very rightly take a certain pride in comparing the quality of his grass, grain, cattle, and sheep with that of the River Plate products, and in the same way an Argentine or a Uruguayan may retaliate by pointing out some of the merits of his own land in these respects. But at this point, it seems to me all rivalry ends. As regards commercial competition in the damaging sense of the word, there can surely be no more grounds for this than would be possible between two coal mines !

The actual possibility of a competitive state of affairs of the kind was brought somewhat forcibly to my notice a good many years ago. Then, the publication of a work of mine dealing with Argentina caused a certain reviewer, who evinced perhaps more kindness to the pages than international judgment, to advise those of his readers who might be contemplating settling in one of the Dominions to peruse the new work before taking any such step.



The matter was rather hotly taken up by a London morning newspaper, which protested against the lack of patriotic spirit which, it maintained, was evidenced by this advice.

In this respect, I fully agree on general principles with the newspaper, although my sympathy stops short at the point where it attempted to drag the author in as a fellow culprit in this display of laxity. After all, it is not more logical to hold a writer responsible for the opinions of his critics than to blame a Ribston Pippin tree because someone has been careless enough to graft a cider apple branch on to its wood ! Perhaps this metaphor is unduly complacent. But in any case an absence of several thousand miles from London prevented any attempt at repartee at the time, and perhaps a lapse of nearly ten years does not speak well for one's efficiency as a ready reckoner in this respect !

The point raised, however, is an interesting one. To my mind, as I have said above, there seems no question of rivalry in the commercial sense of the word between the Dominions and the South American Republics. This surely could only occur were both competing in the same market for the sale of goods, for there was a greater supply than demand. This has not been the case for a long time now with either. Such difficulties as have been encountered in both cases have not been concerned with the finding of a ready market for meat and wheat, but rather in maintaining supplies sufficient to satisfy the ever-increasing demand. To what extent these difficulties have increased at the present moment is, of course, too obvious to need any comment.

On the other hand, it might be urged that every man and every piece of money that is diverted from our own Dominions serve to lessen their potential enterprise and productive power. There would have been a considerable amount to be said, no doubt, for this argument a quarter of a century ago, when the populations of the Dominions had not attained to anything approaching their present-day importance, and when so many of the large sheep stations and cattle runs still awaited the capital and the enterprise which was to divide them off into lesser and more closely worked areas, and which was to bring the lesser holder, the "Cockatoo farmer," into his own.

But to-day the situation is entirely different. The present values of land in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada are in themselves sufficient proof of the extent to which farming property has been taken up in these flourishing countries. They are now in a position to pick and choose the type of immigrant they require, and, it seems very wisely, have already taken steps in this direction. From the point of view of British labour the circumstances in South America fall into an entirely different category. It may most emphatically be said that even the most temperate of these Republics is not in any way fitted to receive the British emigrant in bulk. This is put entirely out of the question by the conditions of language, environment, and old-standing local manners and customs. Humanly speaking, moreover, it is impossible to foresee the time when such obstacles to a general tide of British emigration will be overcome in these particular countries. The

question of this most important factor of all, therefore, at once becomes obliterated.

Turning to the question of finance, we find a situation that is in some respects similar. The recent progress of the Dominions has been sufficiently rapid and assured to place them in a strong position in this respect. Speaking on broad lines, they may be said to have attained to a fortunate independence. So marked has this become, that they themselves have now taken a hand in the development of the South American Republics!

This has already assumed the form of the provision of both men and money. New Zealand, for instance, has assisted not a little in the welfare of the Argentine sheep industry, while Canada has begun to play an important part in financial and industrial enterprises, more especially in the eastern states of the continent.

Surely these latter circumstances alone constitute sufficient proof of the complete want of any clashing interests between the two. Indeed, it is difficult to gather from the situation, as it has now presented itself for some time, how the welfare of the Dominions can in any way suffer from the prosperity of South America. On the contrary, it would seem clear from the indications which have already been given that it will become part of their policy to benefit themselves by assisting in the development of certain areas of the southern continent.

## CHAPTER IX

### RIO AND ITS SURROUNDINGS—I.

FROM the geographical point of view Brazil is situated far nearer to London, Paris, and New York than is Argentina. But hard and fast geographical considerations do not find an invariable response in the circumstances of a country. This is exemplified by many of the attributes of these two Republics, notably in the atmosphere of their respective capitals of Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires.

Buenos Aires is usually held out as the most remarkable instance of precocity in the growth of a city. In many respects this claim is no doubt justified. In any case it gives its inhabitants the sensation of being in the closest touch with the other great centres of the world. It is peculiarly susceptible to international influences. An hour after an important occurrence in Europe, the United States, Australia, or elsewhere, the newsboys are racing along the crowded main thoroughfares of the town on the banks of the River Plate, shouting their wares of information. Political moves, racing results, commercial happenings, war news—the tidings of all these come flashing their way red-hot to the Argentine capital, and the pulse of the cosmopolitan public, stirred or depressed, beats in much the same way, and is agitated at much the same



time as that of the remainder of the earth's centres where human affairs are volcanic and frequent.

In every respect Rio de Janeiro is a worthy rival to Buenos Aires. But the former lacks something of that almost unique sense of cosmopolitanism that is so marked a feature of the latter. Life in the Brazilian capital is still coloured by some traits of national individuality. Its volume flows in a more deliberate fashion than in the other, but, if it lacks the full wealth of eddies and cataracts, it is none the less interesting for that. The average inhabitant of Rio de Janeiro does not worry unduly if the news from overseas should have staled by the space of half an hour or so by the time it reaches him, though he would be the first to resent any really material delay.

Rio, too, as a port of call, has never yet attained to the importance of Buenos Aires. Steamer screws seem to beat its blue waters neither quite so continuously nor feverishly as they thrash the yellow flood of the River Plate. In the past it has even been treated by a certain number of liners, Buenos Aires-bound, as a country side station is apt to suffer at the hands, or wheels, of a London express. As a result of this, there is a less obvious coming of strangers in Rio than is the case in Buenos Aires.

As a matter of fact, it is difficult to refer to the one city without bringing the other into the question. Ever since the first days of the independence of both Brazil and Argentina there has existed a peculiar rivalry between the two. There have been very few Brazilians who, chancing to find themselves in Buenos Aires, have not admitted a certain number

of good points in the town, and shrugged their shoulders at a good many more, while an Argentine in Rio would mingle his opinions in precisely the same fashion. Such views, however, do not find very frequent expression, for the simple reason that the numbers of both the Brazilian community in Buenos Aires and of the Argentine community in Rio de Janeiro are extraordinarily small.

From the point of view of outward charm and physical attractions each city differs so widely from the other that no rivalry need necessarily enter into the question at all. Man alone has made Buenos Aires what it is; nature has had much to say in the fashioning of the delights of Rio. The former capital sits on a mud flat utterly devoid of intrinsic beauty. Its sole natural relief is the muddy river, the apparently boundless extent of which is occasionally tinged to an extent of giving it an appearance of being itself a vast field of ploughed soil. Rio, on the other hand, is situated among some of the most charming surroundings in the entire world. As equal enthusiasm has been shown in the construction of both cities, it may readily be imagined which of the two affords the pleasanter picture to the eye.

In many respects, indeed, Rio possesses supreme advantages over Buenos Aires. This applies not only to its surroundings, but to the interior of the town itself. Buenos Aires has achieved some remarkably fine work in the way of public gardens out of such unsatisfactory material as lay to its hand. But in Rio, in whatever part of the town one may find oneself, it is never more than a short stroll to one of those perfectly enchanting little

*praças*, or parks, in which the city abounds, and which seem to have been quite specially adapted by nature for that purpose. The design of the water front facing the bay is, I think, almost unequalled anywhere, and in all directions is the background of the mountains, which in some places rise sufficiently near to overhang parts of the town. Rio is a city of panorama, as well as of buildings. It is not surprising that the Brazilian should be as proud as he is of his magnificent capital.

As for the bay itself, its waters would still be sufficiently beautiful, even if bereft of their enchanting surroundings. With the ever-changing lights on their surface, and the countless little islands that prick out from the amethyst, green, mauve, or purple—whichever it may be that the hour or the sun has called into being—the great harbour affords an ideal ground for small boat cruising. And at night the clusters of lights from the ferry boats, as they flit across from shore to shore, sliding like little pendants of jewels across the dark mirror of the still waters, make just the wanted finishing touch to a fairy-like scene.

But the waters of the bay are not invariably smooth. It has curious moods. There are times when it seems to be stirred by some giant force lurking far beneath its placid surface. Thus, a few years ago, when not the faintest breeze stirred the palm-leaves or the festoons of flowers ashore, its waters convulsed themselves into great breakers that swept angrily across the bay, and grew and grew in might until they pounded to bits various portions of massive sea-walls and breakwaters. No doubt

the origin of the disturbance was seismic. In any case it was a pretty flurry while it lasted.

Even in ordinary circumstances the sea that is capable of being churned up in the beautiful harbour is amazing, considering the narrowness of its entrance and its mountainous surroundings. A gale which blew during my last stay at the spot provided a very emphatic instance of this. Then, the rollers came ploughing towards even the most sheltered stretches of the Avenida Beira Mar, and the great heaps of water thundered in to thud upon the barrier wall with a force that made many of the largest buildings, distant nearly fifty yards from the edge, quiver from top to bottom.

It was an attack in force on the part of the sea, and the town authorities, realising this, hurried gangs of men to the assistance of the threatened Avenida. For a time the wall defended itself stubbornly. Columns of spray rose with a dull roar high into the air, to fall crashing upon its surface in an attempt to smother it, much to the delight of youngsters of all shades of complexion, who dodged in and out among the white cascades, in the time-honoured sport of devil take the hindmost. Presently, as sand and stones came hurtling downwards among the falling waters, flagellating the flower-beds and blossoming trees, the children discreetly retired, to give place to the men on duty, who spurred themselves to the task of endeavouring to shovel back into the sea as much as was flung from it.

After a time the waves found a weak spot, where the masonry crumbled and the first electric standard



fell with a crash. Pursuing its advantage with fresh thunderings, the water smote harder and harder, attacking the great thoroughfare now, not only from above, but from below as well. Tall fountains began to spout up from the drain holes in the centre of the outer roadway, taking the army of workers in the rear, and routing some of their squads with much loss of dryness to clothing.

For hour after hour the pounding continued, and for a time the sea had things almost its own way. But the next day all was calm. The Avenida had survived. The débris was being removed, and the gaps were already undergoing repair, while men were hosing the lines of trees to remove the traces of salt water from their leaves. It was altogether no small feat in organisation.

Outside, on the Copacabana beach, facing the open Atlantic, the scene, of course, had been much wilder. A depth of a quarter of a mile of foam, mountainous at its start remote from the beach, lowly and seething at its end, beat upon the sand there. And in the end the residents in many parts of the Avenida Atlantica found that they no longer possessed the road that they had flattered themselves had been permanently thrown in with their houses. That lay, shattered and crumbling, beneath the waves, and in its place was the edge of the sea !

Having started off by a byway which has led us to a spot that is really not very much concerned with the primary considerations of Rio, we may as well remain there for a few moments longer in order that the very latest of Rio's outskirts may be described. The houses that line the long curve of

the Atlantic bay here present a brave front. Many are prettily designed; others are ornate to the point almost of bewildering one who regards them for the first time. Interspersed between the brilliant white buildings are others of every conceivable tint that enliven the space between the green and grey of the mountains and the blue of the ocean. Some of these, contrived in brilliant orange, resemble gingerbread houses, every yard of their surface covered with toy battlements, spires, domes, balconies, and every conceivable decoration of the kind. The surface of these elaborate confections is so cake-like, moreover, that it must be difficult to live in them without experiencing an overwhelming temptation to gnaw at their walls.

Copacabana, that a few years ago was innocent of a single dwelling, is the Atlantic bathing resort of Rio. The recreation is taken very seriously. In fact, bathing at Copacabana is by no means that free and easy proceeding that is usually associated with tropical beaches, Blue Lagoons, and all similar neighbourhoods. There are high and stern authorities who lay down the law as to where the cosmopolitan inhabitants of the bay shall bathe, and how they shall do it. Extreme propriety in costume is, very rightly, insisted on, and a garb that may be cut a little too high or a little too low is liable to bring down official warning upon its wearer.

Indeed, the regulations which hedge about these shining sands are very comprehensive. Dogs, for instance, are prohibited from entering the water at those places where human beings bathe—an edict that ensures a select gathering at the expense of much canine chagrin.

Each of the three or four spots devoted to bathing on the Copacabana beach is marked out by a couple of flags stuck in the sand, and by a parasol-shaded observation post up which a dusky observer climbs in order to see that none of the bathers are in peril, and, incidentally, in order to assist in the censoring of their costumes. He has a couple of underlings who stand by beneath to render assistance in case it should be needed by the swimmers. These are reputed to be magnificent watermen, and it is probable that they are, but I have never had the opportunity of seeing them at their life-saving work. Their job is probably a light one, as it is sufficiently seldom that the surf and the currents permit the bathers to go far out of their depth. So the dusky angel up aloft, sheltered by his kindly parasol, may take life fairly easily—as it is possible that he would in any circumstances.

It is an extraordinary beach, this, where the inhabitants of the Avenida Atlantica bathe. It is seldom that the sand seems to know its own mind for two days running. On Friday you may walk out into the sea for a hundred yards, and scarcely wet your body above the knees. On Saturday, expecting the same experience, you will drop into deep water some ten feet from the edge of the waves. On Sunday again you will find a depression some fifty feet out, with a great shoal away beyond that the waves have scarcely succeeded in covering. I would not go so far as to call it a feminine thing, but it is rather feckless, frivolous, and feverish. At the same time it is intensely alluring. Very few can have surfeit of these bright

warm waters that caress one day, and give out great buffets the next; for even the buffets have a most wholesome effect that sends the bather out to dress, invigorated and well pleased with life.

It will be clear, I hope, to anyone with a knowledge of Rio, that this chapter has been written under the influence of the atmosphere of the place. For its scenery is apt to hold both the eye and attention to such an extent that it is wont to take an unusually long time at the spot itself to accord to the inhabitants themselves the proper amount of attention that they deserve. It is high time now to turn to this important human element.

Although the population of Rio is not so cosmopolitan as that of Buenos Aires, it is, in some respects, far more heterogeneous. It is only natural that, the further south one proceeds in the vast Republic, the fairer becomes the tinge of the generality of its populations. Rio, of course, is well to the south of the extreme dusky zone, but the proportion of its inhabitants who are of full African blood is very considerable, and the picturesque costumes of many of these lend an added note of colour to the thoroughfares of the great capital of Brazil, which, as a matter of fact, are quite sufficiently striking in themselves without any further addition of the sort. Rio amiably permits a certain amount of lounging at street corners, which would be impossible in the crowded and, for the most part, narrow thoroughfares of Buenos Aires. But it must not be gathered from this that an abundance of enterprise and energy does not exist in the city.



Life in general in the Brazilian capital is free and easy to a very agreeable pitch. The undeniably sub-tropical nature of its climate discourages any serious attempt at the conventional garb of Northern Europe such as obtain in some other parts of the continent, where silk hats and black coats from time to time play a losing game against the hot rays of the sun. The Brazilian of the capital is not over-addicted to display, and that type of visitor from the country to the capital who was wont to hang diamond ornaments on every possible corner of his costume has become very rare. He is contented with far fewer social distractions than is the Argentine, and, owing principally to the climate and to the nature of the country, he is not permeated with the latter's enthusiastic admiration for horseflesh. There is a very excellent Jockey Club in Rio—but no racecourse in the neighbourhood that I know of.

The educated Brazilian may certainly rank as one of the most intellectual of all the types of South Americans. The literature alone that has been produced in the Republic is sufficient proof of this, although in painting—as almost everywhere else throughout the New World—his brush has not kept pace with his pen. He is a keen lover of music, the educated classes having a very full appreciation of the classical side of this, and in this art he frequently excels. As a scientist, he has shown himself capable of feats of the first order. The perfection of the researches for antidotes against snake-bites, the stamping out of yellow fever, and the aerial record of Santos Dumont—a man sufficiently modest never to have risen higher than the third

floor of an hotel !—may be taken as some isolated instances of this. Indeed, the Brazilians of the upper classes have shown their capabilities in too varied a manner for all of these to be enumerated here.

It may be the long centuries of close association between the British and both the Portuguese and their South American descendants that makes the friendship between the individual members of either race seem to come in so easy and natural a manner. Indeed, it may be said that the relations between the two are of an even more frank and intimate nature than is the case with the corresponding peoples in many parts of Spanish-speaking South America. The national pride of the Brazilian is very deep, and, sensitive being as he is in all respects, this point is perhaps the tenderest of all in his constitution. He is quick to resent the faintest slur upon the circumstances of his nation, and who can blame him for it ?

It is only recently that the true capacity of the Brazilian for managing his own affairs has been acknowledged. The part which he has been obliged to play in South America has been no easy one. He has been overhoused in the sense that the country which has been left to him by his predecessors, the Portuguese, is in reality rather in the nature of a continent than a single State. On this account alone his problems of administration have been extraordinarily difficult, and that his great Republic has continued intact as the home of one nation may be taken as a feather in his cap.

There was doubtless a certain reason for the tendency that once prevailed to refer to Brazilian

affairs in pessimistic tones. It might well have been supposed that the number of those of any intellectual standing was totally insufficient to control successfully the comparatively vast population of illiterate negroes scattered about an enormous area, and this especially in view of the rapidly growing demands made on the capacity of nations by a very exigent species of civilisation. But these fears have proved groundless. The Brazilian has risen to the occasion, and has effected admirable work—so far, of course, as has lain within his powers—both in organisation and education.

As for the inhabitants of Rio, they have done far more than smarten up the buildings, streets, and beautiful gardens of the capital. There have been many notable reforms in the official management of the city. One of the most salient results of this is the improvement of the *personnel* of the police and soldiers. Not so very long ago neither of these branches of public service stood particularly high in the public estimation as regards character. At one time popular rumour ran to the effect that many a convicted criminal was given the option of imprisonment, or of joining the police force! That this rumour was not altogether without foundation seems certain enough. But affairs have improved rapidly and vastly since then, and the status of the modern police force of the capital affords ample testimony to the new spirit which prevails.

It is true that the hyper-critical might still have something to say concerning the briskness of some of these guardians of the peace. Their carriage, from a northern European standpoint, may still

leave something to be desired. They certainly lack rigidity—if that be a failing in a land where rigidity and climate have so little in common. If the policemen loll, so do the palm-leaves. Why should they not, therefore ?

Sometimes, on the less frequented beats, you may see one of them perusing a newspaper. Again, why should he not ? There is no reason why the wider affairs of the world should not be studied in the reposeful intervals between the pursuit of criminals, the collection of the fragments left by odd motor-car accidents, and the answering of questions that are frequently silly put by stray foreigners. It is true that his predecessors would very seldom have been caught out at anything of the kind; for the simple reason that very few of them could read ! As it is, these policemen seem to be a courteous and well-meaning set of men.

In this they do not differ from the average of the other inhabitants of Rio. It is true that his temperament tends towards the excitable and that on occasions his eloquence will froth as fast as the foam of a newly-opened champagne bottle. But he is tender-hearted to a degree, abounding in charity, and it is surely very much to the credit of his nature that he is an adorer of children, who, as a matter of fact, are apt to rule the roost here with a firm hand.

The town has its black sheep, of course. What great centre has not ? When a Brazilian is a black-guard, he is quite thoroughgoing in his profession, and, as likely as not, would murder his own mother, or anybody else's for the equivalent of twopence.



Whereas the corresponding charges of our own black sheep are higher, as they must be in a land where the life of the populace is less simple, more costly, and where the ambitions are wider. In any case, it is probably superfluous to explain that the average Brazilian has no more in common with his criminals than has the inhabitant of any other land. On the contrary, his generosity is most marked, and he shrinks from the sight of suffering as much as he dreads a contagious disease. In such respects as these he has inherited many of the characteristics of his ancestors—or of some of his ancestors—the Portuguese.

There is no doubt that, from the English point of view, the Spaniard suffers somewhat by comparison in such matters as these. According to the Spanish ethics, into the soul of the proper and complete man of his country there should be instilled a certain amount of iron in order to bring about a desirable spirit of independence and callousness. Indeed, in order to produce an instructive contrast, it is merely necessary to go and see a Spanish bull-fight, and afterwards the similar entertainment as waged in Portugal.

The first demands virility in the performers, it is true. But, frequently enough, so do assassinations, burglaries, and even the humbler trade of mere shop-lifting. To assist at the wanton murder of one agonised horse after another seems a pitiful waste of whatever virility and courage may be attached to the matter.

In Portugal the thing is done differently. The tastes of the populace there are satisfied with something less than that the wretched animals should

choke out their lives on the sand of the ring. The splendid horses of the *Cavalheiros* know nothing whatever of those other grim shambles. They are there to show their rider's skill, not to serve as a slow and certain sacrifice. The sight of one of those spirited horses galloping round the arena, dodging the bull's charges time after time, is a stirring one. They are never touched, or, if they are, it is by purest accident—one that brings discredit to the rider's craft—for there is no death by design haunting the Portuguese bull-ring. Even the bull, enraged though he is at the annoying darts, whose shape prevents them from penetrating too far into his hide, departs in the end, unscathed save for their stabs. Ay, and his departure is soothed by a number of pacifying cows, introduced into the ring to make him forget his rage, and to keep him company in his exit to the outer regions—whence he returns to the pastures from which he has been taken.

One of the best advertisements of the comparative humanity of a Portuguese bull-fight is the fact that so remarkably few foreigners know even of the existence of the institution! Its features, at all events, provide an index to the respective ideals of the two countries in certain directions.

Although some attempts have been made to revive bull-fighting at Colonia in Uruguay, that grim sport has practically died away in the River Plate Republics, where, indeed, it has never flourished to any marked extent. In this respect the atmosphere of practically all the countries of southern South America has been seen to exercise the same

effect. This has been the case, as a matter of fact, in matters of far wider importance than mere bull-fights.

Indeed, the development of these countries would seem to have proceeded on lines that were strangely identical, notwithstanding the differences in the various nations and governments, to say nothing of languages. A reference to this will involve a brief digression, but perhaps it is worth while to enter upon it, as it reveals some curious historical phenomena, more especially at the beginning of the nineteenth century, another period of time when the world was in the melting-pot—though the pot then was much smaller, and contained far simpler ingredients.

At that period, as I have already pointed out in this book, events in Brazil proceeded in a fashion that seemed diametrically opposed to the trend of affairs in the Spanish American colonies. Practically at the same moment that the latter were occupied in flinging off all vestiges of a royal authority, and in adopting Republican ideals, the Brazilians saw the status of their country altered from a colony to a kingdom.

Having arrived at this point, it might have been reasonably supposed that the politics of Brazilian and Spanish South America would have nothing in common. In reality the process that all were undergoing at this period was identical, since it is possible for a kingdom to harbour democracy and for autocracy to flourish in a Republic. In this particular instance both the Portuguese and the Spanish Americans were making towards liberal forms of government, although it is very unlikely that they

suspected that they had anything in common at the time !

Contrary to the impression that might be given by its mere succession of titles, with each of its moves from colony to kingdom, and from kingdom to empire, Brazil showed a definite increase in the liberality of her government—an anomalous situation possibly, but one which was undoubtedly due to the apparently irresistible influence of the ethics of the New World, or, if you prefer it, its Republican atmosphere disguised by any name that might be chosen.

The most cursory survey of some of the events in Brazilian history since the arrival in that country of Prince João, with the court of Portugal in the early part of 1808, seems to make this point quite clear. When the royal party, escorted by the British fleet, arrived at the shores of Brazil, it was received with an enthusiasm and a warmth of loyalty that was evoked by a deep and very honourable affection for the mother country. It was undoubtedly these sentiments, as well as the natural gratification at possessing a sovereign government within its own shores, that led the Brazilians to accept with calmness some of the innovations which the court brought in its train.

Some of these innovations, it must be admitted, were sufficiently startling of their kind. Although Prince João himself was free from any affectation of the sort, there were others of the court who were determined that, in order that the Brazilians should be the more deeply impressed, the royal family should be hedged in by a greater degree of majesty than had ever been the case in Portugal itself.



The amount of ceremony introduced in order to bring about this condition of affairs was somewhat overwhelming, and at a rather later stage the progress of the Queen through the streets and surroundings of Rio was made the occasion for obligatory obeisances of a mediæval profundity.

It was soon discovered that this state of affairs could endure no more than dew on grass beneath a midsummer sun. The court of Portugal had thought to mould Brazil to its own design, but it was the spirit of Brazil that ended by influencing the royalty it had received within its shores. The first signs of modern democracy manifested themselves in Dom Pedro the First himself, who, although his political views were not always consistent, showed himself strongly imbued in some respects with American views, and, mingling freely with his subjects, made a stand for the rights of Brazil against the claims of Portugal. The tale of social revolution was completed by the personality of Dom Pedro the Second, whose scientific and literary attainments did honour to his country, and whose tastes seemed to demand the simple life of a gentleman rather than the formalities of a royal existence.

In the end the Republican spirit that would seem to have been latent in the country from the very beginning of its history, and which had been progressing slowly but with irresistible force throughout the nineteenth century, made its claim for an outward form of government that should be consistent with its principles, and in 1889 Dom Pedro and the Brazilians parted on terms of mutual respect. This very brief survey may give some slight idea of the ideals of the Brazilians of to-day.

## CHAPTER X

### RIO AND ITS SURROUNDINGS—II.

THE climate of Rio demands its languid moments in almost every walk of human life. But this accepted order of affairs seems to possess a striking exception in the motoring world, and motors now play a very important part in the affairs of the large South American cities. I have already described the type of adventure with which those must expect to meet who venture to proceed by petrol in Buenos Aires. In Rio it is much the same, only, if possible, considerably more so! The town possesses an unusually large number of high-powered cars, one of the reasons for this being the fact that for a number of years the import tax on these has been no higher than that levied on those of lesser power. Many of these cars are the joy of their chauffeurs' enterprising hearts: more of them are the terror of those newcomers unused to the ways of Rio motoring!

The Rio chauffeur means well—and quickly! The only time at which he is accustomed to proceed at anything approaching what elsewhere is considered a normal pace is when his highly-trained senses tell him that another car is drawing up from behind. On such occasions he will saunter along at some thirty miles an hour, in a condition of merely

assumed lethargy, until the other has drawn abreast of him. Then he will set to and race it, and both will career side by side, with exhausts roaring furiously, at more miles an hour than one likes to think of, until one or the other, beaten in the contest, falls behind, and comparative quiet reigns for that short period which elapses, until the chauffeur has singled out another competitor.

It is his favourite recreation. He never seems to tire of it, and nothing on earth seems to be able to stop him from its enjoyment. In other respects he is quite a reasonable and courteous person. But I believe that, were he offered double his fare to let his rivals proceed unchallenged at their own speed, and to mind nothing but his own business, he would turn his revolutionary fares out on the spot, and thank his stars that he had a lighter car to chase the rest with !

It is possible that the Brazilian Government may have failed in certain respects—it would be strange had it not, considering the millions of square miles it has to deal with ! But the Rio authorities have shown their profound wisdom in separating the two sides of the great avenue, Beira Mar, by a continuous strip of flower-beds and trees, so that on each side motors may only proceed in one way. Were it not for that thoughtful intervention, it would take a very considerable proportion of the population of the town to pick up the daily matchwood !

It is not only to the great seaside thoroughfares of the town itself that the most enjoyable form of motoring is confined. A remarkable enterprise has been shown in cutting really fine roads through the

magnificent forests on the mountains, and even along the cliffs which fringe the Atlantic shore. Some of these drives are sheerly magnificent, and three or four delightful hours may be spent in this way in the midst of a rare and ever-changing panorama.

The Brazilian appreciation of the beauties of nature has been most adequately demonstrated in the arrangement of some of these admirably constructed motor roads that wind in and out of the mountain sides in the neighbourhood of Rio. The progress through the forest glades in all their glory of thick-set leafage and blossom is in itself sufficiently enchanting, even to one to whom the scene comes as no novelty. But that is by no means all that these roads have to offer.

Notwithstanding the promise of the scenery that overhangs the town, there are very few who start out for the first time from the centre of Rio on one of these drives who have any conception of what lies before them. It is not until the car has left behind it the last lengths of tramway line and the final brilliantly-coloured houses of the suburbs that the real work that is involved in the ascent becomes evident. Decidedly none but a powerfully engined automobile would dare to brave the severe and continuous ascent. But, fortunately for itself, Rio possesses a number of these, and in any case the road is excellently engineered for its giddy climb, and the surface as a rule is excellent. There are times, it is true, after an exceptionally heavy period of rain, when one or two short stretches lie a foot or so deep in slippery mud. On such occasions the driver is apt to charge these light-heartedly—five or six



times running, perhaps—until he slithers across in safety to the firm ground on the other side. It is a thrilling experience, and, if a precipice should happen to border the way, one has at least the consolation that the fringe of trees above it would prevent the car, but probably not the passengers, from an abrupt descent into the depths !

The full scheme of this magnificent road only reveals itself slowly. After proceeding for some miles through the forest the vehicle arrives at an open space, terraced, adorned with flower-beds, and furnished with seats. And there, seen from the edge of the terrace, is a panorama of Rio, with all its spread of houses and verdure, its nearer hills and mountains, the wide ramifications of its shimmering bay, and on the further shore the distant mountains that rise up against the horizon in dim blue or brilliant purple.

This in itself would be worth many hours of climbing—more especially since the only unit of the party which has any right to be tired by the process is the car itself. But this first panorama merely serves as an introduction to those others which await the eye higher up in the mountains. On each occasion, as the forest leaves fall away, and the roads lead out into the open, the panorama is wider and more fascinating in the wealth of its distant detail. A wise man in his craft, the engineer of the road has left the finest of all to the last. It is difficult to deal in a sober spirit with the scene of enchantment thus revealed, and, to save a confusion of flounderings after the desired effect, it is safer to leave the entire thing to the imagination !

The atmosphere of Carnival does not enter in the least into this book. Neither had it any concern with Rio during my last visit to that spot, most fatally stricken with a scourge of influenza as it lay. There, indeed, the black garments of the mourners had for chief relief the brilliant colouring of the multitude of coffins.

Nevertheless, not even the most sketchy impression of the Brazilian capital can be complete without some reference to the Carnival that may soon, like that of Buenos Aires, lapse into a mere matter of history. Here, then, is a Carnival evening that may be taken as more or less typical of these festal scenes in that entrancing part of the world.

The blazing sun has long ago fallen behind the horizon peaks. Rio de Janeiro is wrapped now in very soft purple, the tint of its most seductive nights. Here and there on the waters of the bay itself sounds the lapping of a small row-boat propelled by leisurely oars; now and again comes the long wail, "Ohla!" as one boatman calls to another, lost somewhere in the dimness of the night.

But the bay holds more than these slumbrous sounds. There goes the swirl and the cough of a swift launch, her busy horn, tired from the hooting labours of the day, lulled into a rare silence. There, too, farther off, sounds the deeper thudding of the steam-ferry, as, all ablaze, the great square craft ploughs its confined way from the main city to Nictheroy, on the other side of the water.

This is all very well so far as the mere noises of the night are concerned. The eye of any wayfarer on this enchanted bay will roam further afield. The

capital itself will attract it for a certainty. The illumination of the shore boulevards, seen from the waters, lies in lines of brilliant but cold fire. Beyond, the glow of the main city shows a warmer light, while, beyond again, a few ladders of soft light, climbing up into the purple of the sky, mark the course of the mountain roads above the town.

So much for the aspects of the spot from without. From the still, lake-like expanse of the bay it retains a certain mystery, notwithstanding the clear sparkling of the lights. From the direction of the shore comes little beyond a soft hum. It is but a faint echo of the great city, this, borne on the night air that at times seems to sink beneath the fragrance of the tropical scents; perfumes that suggest the languid petals of gigantic blossoms lolling ashore in a superb and passive sensuality.

Who would guess from here that Carnival at Rio was in full swing? Yet you will find that out soon enough for yourself if you make for the shore. It is true that the landing-stage remains much as usual. The wonted group of expectant negroes lounges beneath the foliage of the palms and flowering trees. As usual, too, one wonders whether these dark folk will one day get this mysterious thing for which they seem eternally to wait, and, if so, whether they will be sorry?

The policeman in his light uniform is there, too, as is the custom every day, and so are the pair of soldiers whose gorgeous festal uniforms refuse to allow themselves to be rendered altogether pallid even by the shafts of electric light which strike through the foliage. If there be anything out of

the ordinary it is that the streets in the neighbourhood of the waterside hold fewer people than on normal days. You will, therefore, if you are wise, hasten in the direction of the great central Avenida, from the direction of which you may already hear the first murmurings of the spirit of the hour.

The centre of the town is given up, heart and soul, to this. A very sudden and dramatic transit, this, from the quiet side street into the splendid main thoroughfare. It is a passage from the soft shadows, dimly shown, into a hard and very brilliant glare of light. As for the breathless air, it is quivering now in warm pain beneath the shock of trumpets, whistlings, and gushes of calls and laughter. The entire space of the wide roadway is thronged with cars; every foot of the decorated pavement is pressed by humanity, while in front of the glittering houses hangs a truly tropical wealth of festoons.

Every inch of the wide Avenida stands out almost as clearly as by day. Three strata of tints emerge to hold the eye: the pale white of the elaborate house-fronts, the variegated tints of the festoons, and the dense black and white of the pedestrians below. Down here the cars, obviously with reluctance, are moving leisurely. The pedestrians move more leisurely still, halting from time to time in order to enjoy more eagerly the spectacle in the roadway.

Rio is at all times a city of imposing motor-cars. But to-night these vehicles are decked out in no ordinary fashion. Each is thickly swathed in paper ribbons, the brilliant and variegated streamers of which float out behind like gorgeous trails of seaweed. These paper "serpents," generously flung,



are coiling in all directions through the air. And as the head of each strikes the car which was its target—or perhaps another—the gay paper continues to uncoil until innumerable fragile bands appear to bind the one car to the other. In a feeble clutch, nevertheless, since the bands soon snap, and each vehicle bears away its particular flaunting portion. So all these multi-coloured ribbons stream about the occupants of the cars—girls in white with the wonderful eyes of the South, men in white or thin yellow silk, and children, eager of feature and tongue, taking their part with the rest.

Every square yard of the place is drenched with scent—a scent which deadens even the tropical odours of the town, and the heavy fragrance of the unseen blossoms. Above the heads of the crowd tiny streams of the perfume cross each other, weaving innumerable transitory patterns in the air as the jets are sent up from below. It is one of the most prideful things of the Rio Carnival, this scent. Much of it is costly stuff indeed, liquid which might well moisten the forehead or handkerchief of the most fastidious lady. What if the Rio amateur spends tens of thousands of pounds on it for the occasion! He will tell you so, and there is no reason why you should not believe him. In some respects this is a fairyland—and the dweller in it means to do his Carnival well.

But it is an idle waste of time to stand lost in the crowd. Here is a motor-car—a magnificent great motor-car—for hire, nevertheless. Come into the motor-car! The chauffeur is somewhat dusky of face and hands; but he is dusky nowhere else. His linen uniform is white; his white and gold cap might be envied by any admiral. He is, in fact, a very fine fellow.

The chauffeur's acolyte reclines on the step. Far duskier, and, in fact, quite dingy, he serves in the first place as a useful instrument of comparison. He represents the dark background, against which the brilliance of the other shines as a beam across the night. Yet this subordinate has his other uses. He is a *Fidus Achates*, a doer of odd jobs, a winder of gear, an opener of doors. He occasionally even radiates forth in time of stress as a Hope, when the more brilliant person's efforts to cope with halting machinery die away, as they occasionally do.

Not that the white and gold chauffeur's efforts at the wheel are to be despised. Very far from it. In the Avenida his progress is necessarily curbed. It is a question of follow-my-leader very slowly here, while the caressing "serpents" whirl over and about one all the time. Presently the crowd has been left behind; and when the brilliant white structure of the Monroe Palace has been passed, the globes of the street lamps glow a little further apart. The roadway, divided off by lines of trees, has widened to extraordinarily stately dimensions now. On the left, the houses have fallen away altogether, and in their place the waters of the bay send dancing gleams where the lights strike upon them.

The chauffeur braces himself to his task. In thirty seconds the gleaming waters, the bright lights, the palms, the soft white houses—all these, blurred and streaky, are racing past at a giddy speed, as though in a mad panic to throng to the centre of the town where Carnival reigns. A moth, the rival of a swallow in size, is flapping his way soberly

between the trees. Caught in the vortex of the car's passage, it staggers and tumbles wildly in the air in a struggle against more air-pockets than any human aviator has ever known. Then it has gone—perhaps to find a grave on the waters from the force of sheer nerve shock.

The car has swung inland. Ahead is a mountain, looming directly across the road. Even that does not stop the way. The brilliant hollow of a tunnel gleams to the front, and into this the vehicle plunges like a maddened rabbit making for cover, while the rows of subterranean lights join together and gallop by. Midway in the tunnel a close-set collection of illuminations grows in size with an uncomfortable rapidity. A tram-car flashes past with a deafening roar—and one is glad that the chauffeur's nerves are presumably stronger than that of the recently disturbed moth!

Shortly after the stars have replaced the roof of the tunnel the car is speeding close alongside the waves of the open ocean, along a comparatively narrow parade, flanked by houses on the right. A halt at the Country Club, the outermost building of all that fringe Rio on this side, and then the vehicle swings round for home. But it is by another route this time: past the shoulders of gigantic, humpy mountains, past banana plantations, along verdure-lined roads, where the stars of the fireflies gleam without ceasing, until the houses come into being to line the way again.

There is the Avenida once more. The pace of the car slackens almost to a halt; the thing has been caught up and restrained by the procession of

its fellows. The trumpets and whistles are sounding still; the serpents are still flying, and the crowds are pressing to and fro just as before. This other has been but an interlude—a popular one in Rio. The Carnival encourages such refreshment and change of scene; but it seems to call all men back in due course to assist at its reign.

None but super-optimist, I suppose, would venture to assert that the mass of the Brazilian people would ever attain to that degree of productive energy such as characterises the people of Europe and the United States. Apart from any racial considerations, the climate cannot fail to exercise a profound influence here. Nevertheless, it must not be supposed that the climate of the great Republic is enervating throughout. In many parts of the South the highlands are sufficiently bracing as regards their atmosphere. Indeed, any chance traveller may provide himself with an instance of this in the neighbourhood of Rio itself. He has only to take a ticket from the capital to the neighbouring town of Petropolis, one of the summer resorts of the metropolis, and a place of no mean importance in itself.

He may leave the town by the side of the bay in a languid swelter of heat, but he will have had the benefit of two distinct advantages by the time that the train has finished its toilsome journey up the mountain sides. The first is the almost incredibly beautiful panorama of the capital and its surroundings which he will obtain on the way—provided that the mountain mists do not intervene. The second is the necessity for an overcoat. Should you chance to see men driving through the streets



of Rio with overcoats across their arms to affront a blazing sun, you will know their destination at a glance. It is Petropolis.

The journey from Rio to Petropolis is very delightful. First the way is along an expanse of plain that stretches along the end of the bay. A wealth of flowering trees in the bush here, mauve, white, yellow, and purple, and pink, and almost every conceivable colour. Some of these trees are, as it were, in evening dress; they are all blossom, no leaves. The effect is most gorgeous. At the end of the little plain the train splits up into four sections, and, with an engine attached to each, the cogwheel ascent is begun. The carriage pants and heaves up the steep slope, the engines giving out astonishing clouds of yellow smoke.

Soon the mountains have closed in on either side. The palms and tropical vegetation and rock draw so intimately close to the windows that it would be an easy matter to pluck blossoms and to pull ferns by merely stretching out an arm. From time to time the enchanting valleys unfold themselves, the gigantic, forest-covered slopes of the mountains soaring behind.

Then, towards the end of the journey, comes a view of Rio Bay that is almost unearthly in its beauty—Rio seen from the very far distance this time. The distant bay, the town—miniature now—the peaks, and much of the coastline, stand revealed in a way that is the right of birds and angels rather than the usual lot of man. If ever a view could be said to be aching in its loveliness, it is this. Perhaps it is for this reason that the constructor of the railway has arranged that it shall not be visible for more

than a minute or so. And perhaps it is for the same reason that an even greater power so frequently causes it to be lost behind a relentless mist which clothes the mountain sides, and beards with white the forest trees.

Petropolis has other distinctions besides those of climate. In the old days, when Rio lay at the mercy of yellow fever and other dread scourges of the kind, it was the diplomatic centre of the capital. The greatly improved conditions of the lower city have caused it to lose somewhat in this respect in recent years, but it still ranks as the rendezvous, at all events in summer, of the principal chiefs of legation and their staffs. The British Legation here is one of the few in the continent the appearance of which is worthy of its status, and, thanks to the most able care of the Minister, Sir Arthur Peel, it stands as one of the most beautiful and pleasant places in the entire neighbourhood, where, it is almost unnecessary to say, some very fine work has been done—work that has proved itself by results.

Petropolis gives one of the examples of the comparatively simple life as lived among the upper classes in Brazil as compared with that which prevails in some other Republics of the southern continent. The distances here are nowhere great, and very few of the residents bother to own a vehicle, whether petrol or horse-drawn. Now a state such as this would be almost inconceivable in places of a similar standing elsewhere, where the men of *distinguido* society—something in the fashion of the inhabitants of some of our own Dominions, who will run a mile to catch a horse to ride a few hundred yards—entertain a strong prejudice against even the

most casual perambulations effected outside a resplendent tonneau.

Petropolis, as a matter of fact, is essentially the place for the pedestrian. There are very few spots in its residential quarter that lack their own particular type of beauty—if only that of many delightful houses lying back in their gloriously flowered grounds. Petropolis, in its mountain setting, has, like Rio, well repaid the care that has been bestowed upon it. Even the deep banks of the river that intersects it have been made beautiful by the masses of hydrangeas and other flowers that have been planted on its slopes.

The original population of Petropolis appears to have been composed largely of German settlers, who established themselves in the spot some three-quarters of a century ago. On the surface, no traces of their origin are left, save that the general complexion of the humbler classes of the inhabitants seems somewhat fairer than that of those in the surrounding districts.

On the whole, Petropolis is a very pleasant spot, productive of considerable energy, the sunshine of which is varied by rain far more frequently than is the case in the lowlands. He who objects to a climate that is a wee bit “saft” may occasionally find something to grumble at in the climate of Petropolis; but, after a time, he will learn to treat the frequent drops with the same contempt evinced by everyone else in the place.

In any case no considerations of climate in the warmer spots have prevented the young Brazilians from taking to athletics with all the enthusiasm proper to these occupations. At football, as well

as at other games, they have shown themselves remarkably adept, and into these recreations they have entered wholeheartedly—very markedly to the benefit of their health, it may be said.

Nevertheless, although the Brazilian has gone with the times, and has shown himself capable of appreciating to the full any of those new developments which have proved suitable to his tastes, he has, as has already been remarked, managed to retain his national individuality to a degree which is, perhaps, more noticeable than is the case with the inhabitants of some of the Republics further to the south. Less tempted than these to indulge in the very latest fashions in customs and dress, he goes his own way in a rather more even fashion, and has no objection to allow his own characteristics to remain side by side with a number of those which have been imported from abroad. He goes his own way with a sturdiness which cannot but be admired, and this applies to weightier matters than those of fashions. Thus, when so many of the Spanish-speaking South American Republics were succumbing to the rule of being provided with Prussian-trained armies, Brazil, profoundly uninfluenced, invited from the French such amount of instruction as she considered needful in this respect.

Nearly all these remarks, it should be said, apply to the southern half of Brazil rather than to the northern States. In so vast a Republic it is quite out of the question to attempt to generalise. One might (almost !) as well make the same description apply to Canada and India, for the mere reason that they both formed part of the same Empire. As one proceeds farther and farther to the north



in the interior of Brazil the scarcer grows the population and the darker the skins. In the Amazon basin, for instance, there are many thousands of square miles that will scarcely have been trod by the foot of man by the time that the agricultural and pastoral districts in the far south of the Republic have been so minutely parcelled out, that each inhabitant will know to an inch the boundary of his neighbour's few acres. Though, of course, this fairly safe prophecy does not in the least apply to such important northern centres as Bahia, Pernambuco, and the neighbourhoods of other towns that have the advantage of being ocean or river ports.

But Brazil is altogether too extensive a country to wander over at will in the course of a few pages. Let us return to Rio before we get lost in the vast remotenesses of the North. We have not yet touched upon its British community, which deserves more than a passing word. Since so many comparisons have already been drawn between the capitals of Brazil and Argentina, there is no reason why this topic should not afford one more—more especially since there are no more of the dreaded features of odiousness to be taken into consideration in this respect than in the rest.

There are, nevertheless, not a few wide distinctions between the respective British communities of Rio and Buenos Aires. The latter is sufficiently large to be divided into cliques, or sets, or by whatever other name you may choose to call those partitions of a society that is numerous enough to permit people to avoid each other if they desire. Thus, in the neighbourhood of the Argentine capital one may take one's choice of several suburbs in

each of which the British abound, and may settle upon a residence in the one which promises most accurately to suit one's tastes and inclinations. The popular theory here is to the effect that the inhabitants of Hurlingham look somewhat askance at those of Belgrano, while the men of Belgrano—and, for all I know, the ladies also—fight shy of too cordial an intimacy with the dwellers of Temperley, and so on. This may or may not be so. My only experience in the matter is that all these spots seemed pleasant places inhabited by pleasant people—so possibly I am no judge.

In any case the smaller British world of Rio shows no trace of geographical distinctions of the kind. Its members there appear to form a single colony rather than a collection of communities. Their life, moreover, is comparatively free and easy. The pleasant topography of the city obviates any inconvenient gaps between work and play. Five minutes in a motor-car suffices to take one from an office in the heart of the city to a most pleasant club, palm-shaded and flower-bedecked, where tennis is played on hard courts, and where bowls are rolled on real, and surprisingly good, turf. Twenty minutes in the same rapid vehicle will see one at a similar institution on the ocean beach at the far outskirts of the city, where an admirable club-house provides every comfort that can be desired. A feature of the Central Club, too, situated in the great Avenida, and the chief place of meeting for the British of Rio, is that its doors are not bolted and barred against ladies, who have the freedom of the place—with the sole exception, apparently, of the inmost cocktail sanctum—by which means it becomes a very real social centre.

Curiously enough, there is no English daily paper published in Rio, which is somewhat surprising, when the fact is taken into consideration that Montevideo, with its far smaller British population, possesses an old-standing organ of the kind of its own. The abundance of English newspapers in Argentina, too, makes this omission still more remarkable. Of course, so far as the ordinary news of the day is concerned, the *Jornal do Commercio* and the other leading Brazilian publications provide everything that is necessary, and the explanation of this circumstance is no doubt largely due to the fact that, while in Argentina, there are many British who have merely a nodding acquaintance with the Spanish tongue, the same cannot be said of the generality of the Rio British as regards Portuguese.

It has been owing to the intimacy between the British and the Portuguese—an intimacy that is not to be achieved by mere treaties and political alliances, however closely these may be drawn—that the co-operation of the two in the varied and difficult tasks set by that most hard task-master of all, war, has been accomplished with such smoothness. The work of the inter-allied committees has been notably good here, and, most ably backed by the administrative and commercial officials of the Legation, that itself is fortunate in being in the charge of a Minister Plenipotentiary who enjoys a wide and well-deserved popularity among the Brazilians, they have achieved very fine results. At the same time it must, of course, be admitted, that these have not had to contend with the same number of anxious considerations such as were the lot of many of the corresponding bodies in the neutral Republics of the continent.

The relations between the British and the Brazilians, too, have undoubtedly been still further cemented by the fact that Brazil took up her attitude in the war from the pure force of her convictions. To her credit be it said that no question of ulterior motives affected her decision in the least. As a matter of fact, the circumstances of the struggle have inconvenienced her to a considerably greater extent than has been the case with some of her neighbours. The disadvantages under which she has laboured are by no means confined to the losses suffered by her coffee industry. The shortage of tonnage available for transport—although this has already been made up to a certain extent by the acquisition of some fine German vessels—was more acutely felt by her than by any other Republic on the east coast, as so many ships had to be deviated from her ports in order to fetch from the meat centres to the south of her frontiers those supplies which were so essential to Europe at the time. Indeed, so serious did this situation become that shortly before the end of the war a system of rationing was contemplated, not on account, of course, of any actual dearth of food in the country, but owing to the extreme difficulty experienced in transporting it from one place to another.

It is doubly gratifying, therefore, that the present industrial and commercial prospects of the great Republic should find themselves so peculiarly favourable. So far as it is humanly possible to judge, she appears to be on the eve of a tide of prosperity, greater probably than she has ever known before—which affords one of those very rare but most desirable instances of poetic justice.



## CHAPTER XI

### BRITISH AND AMERICANS IN SOUTH AMERICA

UNTIL quite recent years the social and industrial gap which divided the two continents of America was wider than that which separated South America from Europe. It is, perhaps, superfluous to explain that the reason for this has not lain in any fundamental lack of interest on the part of the people of the United States in the affairs of their southern neighbours, but merely existed on account of the attention which the northern Republic had necessarily to pay to the development of its own territories and home affairs, and that caused its enterprise—at all events as regards land and communications—to be concentrated within its own frontiers. Until a short time ago, therefore, Buenos Aires stood to many Americans as merely the name of some place to the south of Mexico, while to the average inhabitant of South America *Nueva York* stood as a centre of agricultural implement supplies in an otherwise unknown land somewhere in the bleak and bitter north.

But the situation has now altered completely and very rapidly. The United States has finished the task of tidying up its remotest corners, and of peopling them not only with agriculturists, but with factory hands as well. It has already reached the point where it is loth to be any longer content with

the mere overflowing of its manufactures into other lands. It desires that its more permanent ramifications of intimate enterprise should extend themselves abroad, not only with the object of assisting the sale of American products, but in order to influence, and up to a certain point control, the industries of foreign countries themselves. In this it is only conforming to the economic history of all nations.

Undoubtedly the chief factor which marked this turning-point was the cessation of the export of beef from the United States. When some years ago the Republic changed its status from an exporter to an importer of this prime necessity of life its industrial interests had, as an inevitable consequence, to become internationalised. Hence the hastening down to the mouth of the Rio de la Plata of the meat-packing magnates, who snatched the local factories into their hands with an apparent ease that, speaking frankly, was somewhat disconcerting at the time, and who sowed the seed of chilling factories with an energy that caused the giant growths to swell at an amazing rate, not only in Argentina and Uruguay, but at a later date in the newer field of southern Brazil as well.

Practically at the same time as the United States beef industry underwent this important development the railroad builders, having sufficiently harnessed their own land with iron and steel, began to look about them for new fields of enterprise. These, too, came down to South America, and without delay began to assist in the opening up of railway communications in order to extend their field of industry, and to help to make good that dream which not so long ago appeared impossible of realisation—the

Pan-American Railway. The start having once been made, there followed the financiers, bankers, and general merchants, to whom the possibilities of this new field of expansion had now become plain.

It may thus be said that South America, from the wholesale industrial and commercial point of view, has only been discovered by the Northerners within the last dozen years. Certainly, until that time the efforts of the United States had been merely sporadic, although generally very ably conceived. It was practically as strangers in a strange land that they entered upon their first serious commercial efforts. It must be remembered, too, that the North Americans—as the Latins insist that they should be termed—had lacked in general that sentiment of intimacy and historical partnership which had characterised the associations of the British with Latin America since the very commencement of the nineteenth century. Although the United States at the period of the South American War of Independence had assisted the patriot cause to a certain extent with both men and funds, her domestic circumstances had not permitted her to play the leading part as an unofficial ally which England may surely claim with justice in the course of the serried events of the liberation.

From the purely sentimental point of view, the United States had been lacking in the advantages reaped by a nation that has produced a Cochrane, O'Higgins, and a Miller. Not that the advantages were by any means restricted to sentiment at the period. It was, of course, the very close relations cultivated on the battlefields which led to the

practical monopoly of the South American trade which Great Britain enjoyed for a considerable time after the independence of the continent. It is true that when affairs became somewhat more settled, and the promise of the South began to reveal itself, there were some notable attempts to foster the trade of the United States with the Latin Republics. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century, for instance, American enterprise in various parts of South America received a distinct impetus, and between 1840 and 1850 the United States shipowners made a strong bid for the shipping trade of the continent. It was at this period that two American missionaries, Messrs. Kidder and Fletcher, who were visiting Brazil, became very active, not only in promoting their spiritual work, but also in advancing their country's commercial prospects. Their propaganda appears to have been extremely intelligent, and in 1855 Mr. Fletcher arranged an exhibition of American-made goods in Rio de Janeiro. He explains the motives that impelled him to this in a subsequent interesting letter, in which he remarks:

“ Having often had occasion while in Brazil to remark the ignorance which prevailed in regard to my own country, and the reciprocal ignorance of the people of the United States in regard to Brazil, I desired to do all that was in the power of a single individual to remove erroneous impressions and to bring about a better understanding between the two countries. There were higher objects in view than the mere diffusion of knowledge and the promotion of commerce; and, now that two years have elapsed since this little effort was undertaken, I have the satisfaction of knowing that new avenues of reciprocity have been opened, that school books have



been prepared for Brazil in the American style, and that thousands of dollars' worth of some of the articles displayed have been ordered since 1855."

The results of this very laudable effort, however, do not seem to have tended to any wholesale development of American trade with Brazil during the period which followed. It was just at this time, as a matter of fact, that William Wheelwright's activities were at their height, and Wheelwright, born in Massachusetts, was one of the greatest pioneers in railways and general communications that South America has known. But Wheelwright, doubtless finding that his own country was not yet ripe for weighty enterprises so far afield, eventually threw in his lot with the British.

The definite victory of steam over sails, too, in the shipping world, which played such havoc with the American clipper trade, was largely responsible for the comparative loss of interest on the part of the United States in the affairs of the South, save, of course, in such respects as the sale of agricultural implements and other objects of the kind, which the similar needs of both continents made it a simple matter to supply. This was somewhat strikingly exemplified by the fact that many passengers from the States to Rio or Buenos Aires found it simplest to travel to their destination by way of Southampton—as, indeed, has frequently been the case up to the time of the outbreak of the European war. This state of affairs, as has been said, lasted until the turn of the nineteenth century, when the influx from North to South began to set in very suddenly and in real earnest. Indeed, the pace of the American in-

vasion, that increased still more during the first two years of the war, has been sufficiently rapid to alter the majority of the aspects of the markets of South America.

Now, whereas the present-day United States trade with South America has sprung up, like a mushroom, almost overnight, that of the British is the result of a slow and steady growth of rather more than a century. Its roots have, therefore, had time to sink in very deeply—if anything can be said to be deep-rooted in this age of continuous upheaval. Dating from the turmoil of the War of Independence, its commercial streams have trickled everywhere throughout the continent, spreading slowly and continuously as, little by little, the affairs of the South Americans grew normal. The flow has been entirely natural. It has been assisted by no Government subsidies, and has meandered hither and thither as the opportunities arose, and as the need of it became felt. It has been strangely lacking in any great central organisation—a feature that is characteristic of British trade all the world over—and has offered the benefits as well as the disadvantages of purely individual enterprise.

It has long been the fashion, chiefly among the members of that race themselves, to say that the British have very little knowledge of South America and the South Americans. This is undoubtedly true so far as the inhabitants of Great Britain itself is concerned, as it is of those of Europe in general and of the United States. But this accusation certainly does not seem to me to fit the case of the average Englishman settled in the Latin continent. The

militant partnership has probably given the Americans a closer understanding of the fact that the most ardent critics of all things British are the people of Britain ! It seems certain that, were the limitations of their representatives in South America as marked as is occasionally professed, British trade with the continent would never have attained to the position that it has not only won for itself but that it has succeeded in retaining.

My own experience is that the Englishman engaged in affairs in Latin America has frequently to contend not only with his competitors on the spot, but with his principals or sellers at home, who in the past were only too prone to disregard his advice and urgings, and whom it was a hard matter to persuade that their interests had suffered in any way on account of the omission. But, without going further into this matter, I think we may take it for granted that the situation of the British in South America is not quite so lamentable as it is sometimes made out to be, and it may at least be put to the credit of the manufacturers at home that they have taken to apply a far larger degree of enterprise and thought to their transactions with the Latins of the South than was the case towards the end of the nineteenth century—when, indeed, it cannot be said that any nation took especial pains to study the needs of a continent, the prospects of which were still regarded with some doubt.

As regards the large amount of British capital invested in the southern Republics, this occasionally acts as a somewhat uncomfortable hostage. "You cannot well fail to see eye to eye with our views, seeing that no many of our interests are yours,"

was the significant and characteristic remark made to me by one of the Presidents some years ago. But there is another side to British landed proprietorship of old-standing in such countries as Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay. The intimacy and mutual understanding between the two races has been vastly increased by this common ownership of land, which has brought about an unusually close and sympathetic contact, since both the good luck and the misfortunes of farmers are wont to affect all classes of their community alike. This sentiment is wont to spread up to a point to the town populations, although the entirely different circumstances prevailing in the large urban centres only enable them to echo it in a minor degree.

It is by the side of the British resident in the towns rather than as a neighbour of the landowner that the American has for the most part come to take his place. Of the many nationalities that go to make up the populations of these southern centres he is the last to arrive. But he has already made great haste. His numerous offices, banks, and factories, and his rarer shops, are opening as rapidly as flowers in May, and he has definitely announced his intention of competing in no uncertain fashion for the supremacy of the trade. I have no exact idea of the numbers in which he has come down, but they must be very formidable. Certainly, notwithstanding the thousands of British who left South America to go to war, I never heard so much English spoken in the streets of the capitals of the southern half of the continent as in 1918.

Indeed, there is no doubt that the American has recently enjoyed great opportunities in South America.



He has made the most of a number of them, but—it is, of course, easy to criticise—there seems no doubt that he has lost a certain amount of others. Perhaps on the whole the advantages of running outweigh those of walking, though the more rapid course involves overlooking a thing or two on the way. The pioneers of the various industries found themselves obliged to work on a field that was strange to them. There is no doubt that some of them made the mistake of refusing to take into consideration the peculiarities of the South American. These, a little apt to confuse the ethics of the progressive southern Republics with those of the less advanced northern offshoots of Iberian colonisation with which they had previously been brought into contact, showed an occasional rash enthusiasm in rubbing national fur the wrong way, even if by no other means than an open expression of impatience when business matters did not proceed with a Wall Street rapidity, or an over-emphasis of the dependence of the South American on United States goods.

A wider experience has largely modified this attitude, and has tended to the successful unlearning of a good deal. This is as well, for the average southern Spanish American is imbued with a strong national sentiment, and can display as great a degree of obstinacy as any other race in the world. As for the quite convenient grooves that he has made for himself he is as fully determined to remain in them as is anyone else to alter them. And why should he not? Clearly, too much insistence on points such as these culminates in a certain amount of racial antagonism, and tends to re-awake that dread of “Yanqui” suzerainty that,

having its birth in the north of the continent, was a very potent factor a few years ago in the mind of so many of the Latin Republics.

I feel certain that any direct contest between the methods of the two continents would not have resulted in any benefit to the United States. But the change which has occurred of late in the methods employed seems to have obviated any likelihood of such an event. A distinct advance in mental elasticity and the manner of negotiation would seem to have become evident for some time now, not only in the commercial world, but in the staffs of Embassies and Legations, the consuls, and the officials in general. To my mind one of the ablest pioneers of this new movement—although I do not for one moment suggest that he was the first to adopt it—was Mr. Fletcher, when Minister in Chile. There is no doubt, indeed, that the average United States diplomat in South America is of an admirable type, and is doing good work for his country. In the same way, the commercial world now produces a number of representatives who are fully capable of dealing with the subtler, and at the same time the broader, aspects of the situation.

In this respect matters between Great Britain and the United States are rapidly becoming more even. Nevertheless, to speak quite frankly, it cannot be said that the average American has yet attained to the experience of the British in dealing with the South American—indeed, it would be strange were this so, considering the short time he has occupied himself with them. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the general organisation in the United States itself for dealing with Latin American affairs

is wider than that in Great Britain. It is true that, from the very nature of things, there could be no body in England corresponding to the Pan-American Union. But the want of some corporate body to sustain the international relations is nevertheless very seriously felt.

As a counterbalancing circumstance it must be said that the organisations of the British in South America considerably outweigh those of the Americans. Here, the interests of the British, being of old-standing, are wider, and many of their important institutions are not confined to the subject of commerce. Among the dozen or so of British newspapers published in the continent are some that carry no small weight; societies such as the British Association in Buenos Aires have a very wide scope, and, turning to the more purely social side, an astonishingly large number of clubs of all varieties have long been used in common by both South Americans and British. This is to say nothing of the British hospitals, the most important of which is to be met with in Buenos Aires, that, admirably managed and staffed, take charge not only of British patients, but of those of other nationalities as well.

I have dilated at such length in other places on the international influences of games that it is scarcely advisable to turn to the subject again at any length here. But it is patent that the remarkable spread of polo, golf, and football has not been achieved without a vast amount of intermingling of the two races. And, as regards the real popularity of the last-mentioned game, what would have been said twenty or thirty years ago of the fact of a

crowd of Argentines in Buenos Aires burning down the pavilion in their hot indignation at the postponement of a match ! No crowd in the Midlands of England could have been more bitterly disappointed, nor shown their annoyance in a more thoroughgoing fashion ! Now here is a point which must appear far more insignificant on the surface than it is in reality. When the baseball ground begins to take its place beside the football field—as, of course, it has already done in the north of the continent—then, I think, will be the time to judge of the respective social influences of the two nations.

Taking all such things into consideration, it would seem, when the innate conservatism of the average South American is borne in mind, that the British might enjoy some advantages in the competition that is about to be so keenly engaged in. Whether all else is equal involves quite another question, and one which does not come within the scope of this chapter. But as regards the nature of this competition there are surely a few words to be said. There seems, for instance, not the slightest reason why an inevitable commercial rivalry should have the faintest effect on the friendship between the two peoples. Were friction the natural result of a competition in trade, then every manufacturing town in Britain or the States would live on bad terms with its neighbour engaged in producing similar material.

There is no doubt that the sincerity with which the two nations have maintained their interests in common during the war is a matter for profound gratification. Good fellowship between the two has played a strong rôle not only in the commercial world, but also among those officials who have had



to take so important a share in the manipulation of the local South American affairs. In this respect a most admirable mutual confidence between the two was nearly always apparent—and this in the face of at least one clandestine but notable—if somewhat irresponsible journalistic effort to disturb the peace of these relations—a freelance and not altogether disinterested attempt that, I believe, met with official reproof.

I am referring elsewhere to the statutory list, the measure which was designed to check the energies of those firms which attempted to deal with enemy traders. But it is necessary to make a passing reference to this here in connection with the British-American alliance. In view of the fact that the "Black List" concerned all nationalities alike, its application necessarily involved an amount of good faith on the part of the respective officials in the absence of which innumerable disputes and ultimate chaos must have supervened. It may well be imagined that no species of negotiations could well be more trying and delicate than these. Nevertheless, I think it may be said that the numerous consultations and mutual concessions in connection with this difficult matter were accomplished practically without a hitch. Indeed, it is a remarkable fact that, in at least one of the most important of the Republics, such protests as were made concerning the alleged undue severity or mildness of the working of this measure were confined to individual firms and people, and never once assumed an international character as between the British and the Americans.

I think it may be said that the friendship between the British and the Americans in the southern

continent was sufficiently sincere to be accepted as a matter of course—one, in fact, which needed no demonstrations nor official banquets to testify to it, although these latter, in the ordinary nature of events, were by no means absent. Of course, there were occasional small and quite healthy symptoms of rivalry, which revealed themselves from time to time in a good-humoured fashion.

A large war map hung up in the hall of the chief hotel in Buenos Aires provided one or two opportunities for these. The positions of the troops on the various fronts were denoted on this in the usual way, that is to say, by the arrangement of the tiny flags of each nationality. There were very few inhabitants of the hotel who did not take an active participation in the manipulation of these. If it seemed to an Englishman that the American flags occupied more than their due shares of the battle-fronts, he would set the matter right forthwith, and the Americans would retaliate by means of the same brilliant little weapons, causing them to shrink the area occupied by the British to what they considered more reasonable limits.

As a result of this tremendously rapid translation of millions of men there was occasionally some confusion—a state of uncertainty that was shared by the Italians. For the manager of the hotel, an ardent Italian, as well known in many European centres as in Buenos Aires, had his own views, and, keen friend of the British though he was, did not approve of seeing too many flags of their nationality on the borders of Italia Irridenta! In this case the matter was more delicate, and the intervention of the head waiter had to be obtained, who, after

having retired for a consultation with his chief, would return with a formal bow, and would announce, not without the ceremony inseparable from an international incident, that the affair had been adjusted.

It was, I suppose, all the result of the spirit of propaganda, and at least showed a praiseworthy keenness, if an occasional want of complete accuracy—which latter characteristic seldom goes hand in hand with enthusiasm! Nevertheless, the Americans seemed to display a commendable absence of the eagle shriek. The spirit of the moment was well given on one occasion by the United States Naval Attaché in Buenos Aires, a very popular official possessed of a sense of humour and a witty tongue and pen—who, together with our own Naval Attaché, made up a fine pair of sailors. It was at the conclusion of an entertainment given at the end of September, 1918, when the tide of the Allied victories was flowing to the full, that he read a lecture on the excess of jubilation that, he alleged, was occurring.

“There’s a lot of cock-crowing going on,” he announced, “and there’s not a beak that’s not going at full blast. Frankly, I don’t like it, for one. We’re doing well—we’re all of us doing well. But let us take it with dignity. Why should we fill the newspapers of this far-off country”(at this point he cast a reproachful glance at the member of his own Embassy who might possibly have been taken to be responsible for some of this) “with floods of praise of our men and of what they have done? Let us have dignity in victory—and less surprise about it. God knows, we can’t take it as a matter of course! But let us take it calmly and in a quieter spirit.”

From an ethical point of view there was not a

question but that he was perfectly right. But then he was less directly interested in propaganda and the influence of the tide of victory upon neutral nations than were some of the others!

Quite apart from any great question such as that of the League of Nations, no one can deny that it is of the utmost importance—and this not for sentimental reasons alone—that the British and Americans should continue to pull together in the future with the same singleness of mind that has distinguished their friendship for the past three years. Nowhere should this be more easy than in South America, where there is ample room and to spare for both, for it is plain that the areas awaiting development there are far too extensive for any one nation to deal with.

As it is, the situation in this respect should be propitious in the extreme. Even if—again speaking with complete frankness—there is in a few limited quarters a vague feeling of injustice that Great Britain should have suffered, as she undoubtedly has, on account of her early participation in the war, which for the time being largely crippled her efforts to compete for the trade of the neutrals, there is nothing in it beyond a casual grumble at circumstances which had to be. And, after all, who has the right to a grumble of this kind, if not a nation that has lost nearly a million lives and countless millions of treasure!

There is no doubt that the tax on Great Britain's resources in connection with South America has been especially heavy when compared with that borne by the United States. But it cannot be said that the Americans have been in any way to blame



for this. Certainly the fault, if any existed, lay not with the plan of the distribution of the enormous available man-power of the United States. Undoubtedly one of the reasons may be looked for in the perhaps almost too generous system which urged the British authorities during the last year of the war to call up the few hundred British remaining in South America whom, it was supposed, might be spared from their occupations without endangering British trade in the extreme.

The result of this procedure, undertaken at a time when the United States were flooding France monthly with hundreds of thousands of young and able-bodied troops, was occasionally somewhat grotesque, and it was owing to this that instances arose of British employers finding themselves assisted by American substitutes for their own experienced men. But this again was through no fault of the Americans, whose actual military preparations at the time were even vaster than proved to be required by the situation. And as to the action of the British authorities in consenting to these final combings out, it is possible that it may have bordered on quixotism, but it did at all events display a chivalry and a single-mindedness of purpose such as can be viewed with no little pride by the people of England, and, it is to be hoped, by those of her Allies also.

It is difficult to forecast the extent of the German effort which must be eventually made in South America, but it is certain that the day will come when these will strain every effort to retrieve their commercial situation and, at the time of writing, it is a somewhat sinister fact that in many of the larger cities of the southern continent their ware-

houses are filled to the brim with goods awaiting the moment when they will be enabled to exchange their enforced subterranean policy for a battle of sales in the open. It is certain that part of their policy will take the shape of an endeavour to sow discord between the British and Americans who are concerned in the same fields of commerce. In order to stave off this danger surely nothing more is necessary than a loyal and resolute continuance of the Anglo-American informal partnership that runs side by side with their competitive efforts.

Many years ago Miranda, the great herald of the South American Revolution, made two striking proposals. The first was that a canal should be cut across the Isthmus of Panama in order to open navigation between the Atlantic and Pacific. This has been achieved. The second was that a defensive alliance should be established between Great Britain, the United States, and South America. Now this proposal should be far easier to work out than the first. Let us hope that it will occur—to the triumphant vindication of Miranda's judgment!

As to the business rivalry that I have already referred to—what of it? There should be no reason why it should not be accompanied not by toleration alone, but by absolutely fraternal sentiments. There has been a greater and more intimate work of understanding in the course of the war than during the period of almost two centuries before it. It has culminated in that mutual sense of respect which a mutual understanding made inevitable. The influence of a co-operation in matters of life and death is bound to remain, and, unless sheer mischief be made, need never die out.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE PRESS OF THE EASTERN REPUBLICS

THE power of the press is very great in South America. In the progressive Republics, moreover, the status of the journalist is very high. There indeed exists a quite insignificant gap between the journalist's chair and a seat in the Cabinet, or even at the President's table itself. The number of leading men who have spent practically all their lives in flitting to and fro between Cabinet and journalistic rank would undoubtedly be surprising, could it be accurately computed! Indeed, it may be said that the South American of the progressive Republics is by temperament a journalist; therefore the number of the literary bees who flit to the honey of paragraphs and columns is quite notable.

The relations, moreover, between the South American press and the public are in some respects more intimate than is the case in England, and the newspaper offices of the large southern cities have assumed the character of almost national institutions. Should any important news be in the making, an eagerly expectant crowd will throng the courtyard of one of these, and the place is filled with the clamour of many-voiced prognostications, for there are very few of this section of the South American public who do not possess very definite opinions as

to what is about to occur. There is very seldom a hush at certain hours of the day in these gathering places. Indeed, anything of the kind only occurs when the official, chalk in hand, arrives upon the scene to inscribe upon the giant blackboard the tidings for which everybody has been waiting.

At such times one of these crowds is well worth watching. Its emotions rise with every syllable that leaps out in clear and relentless white upon the sombre background. If the sentences spell out a really momentous occurrence, a perfect babel of voices bursts at their conclusion. The concourse is swept by waves of comment, punctuated by cataracts of ejaculations. But this is only a prelude to what is to come. Almost immediately the gathering settles down to the accepted business of the hour. There is a swirling and eddying of humanity as the knots are formed, each surrounding an orator who pours forth his views at lightning speed lest another should intervene before he has finished. For there are very few of these people who do not possess very definite opinions as to what has occurred !

When the debate has flamed, smouldered, and finally died away, the gathering will disperse little by little—a very gradual process, this !—and each of its units will go his way, probably to continue the discussion elsewhere. The performance is a most laudable and disinterested one on the part of the newspapers, for it is difficult to believe that it does not harm the sale of the special editions, at all events to some minor degree. But this does not seem to enter at all into the considerations of the newspaper proprietors, who appear to regard



the matter as a public duty. Moreover, at least so far as Argentina is concerned, the leading newspapers are in a sufficiently affluent state to be able to afford with impunity a host of public services of this kind—as, indeed, they prove by their actions in many directions. So far as Argentina is concerned, some idea of the ramifications of the press may be gathered from the fact that in this Republic of about eight million inhabitants nearly one hundred regular monthly, weekly, and daily publications exist, while to this very respectable total must be added a number of others in all parts of the State of a sporadic and intermittent order.

Uruguay possesses about a quarter of this number of organs, which corresponds more or less exactly to the respective populations, while Paraguay is served by about a dozen less than Uruguay. Brazil, on the other hand, produces about half as many publications again as Argentina, the great majority of the important sheets having their home in Rio de Janeiro.

This last total, for a State of some twenty-five million inhabitants, may seem rather out of proportion to those of the former Republics. But there are many circumstances to be taken into consideration in estimating such matters, not the least of which is the remoteness of so many districts, and the scattered nature of the populations. This applies to a certain extent to all the countries in question, but more especially to Brazil, which possesses so many vast tracts of land totally unsuitable to the purpose of newspaper distribution in the ordinary way.

If it be true that the press has an influence on

the politics and fate of nations, it is equally true that a state of war exercises an immense influence on the press. In the present day the high explosives on the battle fronts are echoed, and sometimes forestalled, by the sharp detonations in print from the fighting areas of the newspaper offices, where the machines clank as zealously to carry out their part in the struggle as do any in the munition factories. The whole world, moreover, is open to newspaper warfare. It acknowledges no neutrals, and very rightly, since in this particular form of strife there is probably no single being in existence who can lay any true claim to this title.

Nowhere was this condition of affairs more evident than in Argentina. There, on the politically uncompromised soil, the fight was carried on almost as bitterly as in the trenches, but with dailies as machine guns, weeklies as infantry, and monthlies as heavy artillery, to say nothing of the pamphlet and posters, which served as aeroplanes or tanks. The Argentines possessed a keen sense of the fundamental importance of what was going on in Europe, Near Asia, and Northern Africa. The events of the great struggle tended to act as a fire-extinguisher on even noteworthy events nearer home. Some rather drastic actions on the part of the President, the latest strike threats and accomplishments, a startling development in the conflict at the University of Córdoba, the shortage of fuel, the sensational rise to fame of a new favourite in the race-horse world—the effects of all this would be allowed a remarkably short time in which to blaze before they were smothered by some new development in the world-wide contest.

Journalists discarded their coats—and even for the time being their authoritative interest in home politics—and became war experts, learning the intricate art of saying “I told you so” whichever way the event might go. Others specialised in the political side of the question, and dealt analytically with causes and results; others flung themselves whole-heartedly into the abstract questions of right and wrong, while yet others adopted all three methods in turn.

Seeing that these were assisted by the editors of all the foreign publications in the land—which ranged in language from German and Arabic to Italian, French, and English—a strangely cosmopolitan battle was the result. Groups and subdivisions of newspapers became arrayed against each other in a ceaseless war of argument, to which was added the necessary flow of invective, the soul-satisfying unguent of those more especially who feel that their cause is failing them. Indeed, the clashing of pen was occasionally deafening. But in the face of the keen feeling that had been aroused the finest organs, such as the *Nacion* and the *Prensa* maintained the dignity of the press with an admirable consistency, and when the *Nacion* definitely declared itself opposed to the German doctrines, and therefore in favour of the Allies, the extent of the triumph was not to be underestimated, since it was acknowledged on all sides that an organ of this weight would not incline either way unless prompted by solid and matured convictions.

This journalistic friendship was cemented by the visits to New York and London of its proprietor,

Doctor Jorge Mitre. Modesty is not always in the popular mind held to be one of the chief attributes of the Argentine, but that this attribute holds good there as much as elsewhere may be evidenced from the fact that Doctor Mitre, one of the most prominent men in Argentina, and, incidentally the grandson of General Bartolomé Mitre, perhaps its most famous President, declined the invitation of an official reception in England, preferring to visit that country in his capacity as a private citizen.

As may be imagined, the lesser newspaper world of the States of the Rio de la Plata exhibits far more local colour than is possible in the case of the leading newspapers. But not even the slenderest of its organs would dream for one instant of relinquishing its right to pass an authoritative verdict on the affairs of the wide outer world. After all, why should it? Even the most remotely provincial of the more insignificant organs refuses, for instance, to be altogether dissociated from international politics, and its occasional fiery articles on the abstract rights and wrongs of all the continents might well cause the editors of the *Slocum Magna Gazette* or the *Mudfordshire Sentinel* to writhe in their chairs with envy. It does not follow that the former are any more familiar with their subject. Probably quite the contrary. It is merely a matter of varying abstract enthusiasms.

Many of these lesser sheets are authoritative, on the other hand, in the sense that they are the mouthpieces of political magnates, a case that has its parallel almost throughout the world. But here this particular type of publication is wont to



serve its purpose far more directly than in the majority of other places. There is no concealment of the facts. If a member of the public is ignorant of the circumstance that such and such a paper is the organ of such and such a person, it must be because they are strangers in the land who have never perused its frank sheets.

In addition to all this, there is another section of the press, one which may be called intermittent. In these regions of South America newspapers have a habit of springing up like mushrooms, and of fading far more suddenly when their purpose has been achieved. The main crop of these publications sprouts just before an election, when a candidate for Senate or Congress will, as likely as not, fling out to the world a small sheet of his own, designed to explain his qualifications and political virtues, and to disseminate his views. It will blossom thus during the summer of the elections, will perish in the winter of dropping ballot leaves, and will leave its seed nestling in the ground, to be propagated if necessary at some future time.

Indeed, the use to which the less important even of the regular and permanent South American newspapers are liable to be put is far wider in its scope than in most places. Occasionally one of them will take up a subject with such enthusiasm that the whole of its contents are concentrated on this, while all other earthly considerations go hang—just for that issue, at all events. The present writer had a somewhat amusing experience of this very peculiarity. He had had the honour of writing some pamphlets designed to show the righteousness of the Allied

cause. One of these was designed especially for Paraguay. It included some references to Paraguayan history and compared affairs as they were in the Inland Republic some half a century ago with those which prevailed in Germany just previous to the war—not a little to the detriment of the latter.

The pamphlet was not allowed to go unchallenged. There was an extensive retort. It occupied practically the whole of the issue of one of the daily papers of Asuncion, the capital of Paraguay. Fiery and stimulating, its eloquence moved relentlessly from point to point until the logical and damning conclusion was arrived at that the pamphlet was a hollow fraud. Its object was not the exposure of German methods at all—it was a direct attack on Paraguay! The astonishing number of columns employed in order to make this clear induced some self-clappings on the back in the flattering conviction that the original arguments had got further home than had been hoped. This, however, would have been far less obvious had the inspiration of the retort been Paraguayan, which, of course, it was not.

There is no doubt, indeed, that it was the Germans who were the first to understand the value of a press campaign in these countries, which was very natural, as almost from the start of hostilities they had to contend with a weight of public opinion which was very largely against them. Before the outbreak of war they were already in possession of a formidable number of publications of their own, the majority in the German language, but others printed in

Spanish. Subsequently they founded a certain number of new organs, and undertook a fairly heavy programme in the way of subsidies.

The most mischievous of all the German papers was undoubtedly a daily organ known as *La Union*. This was printed in Spanish, and was so manipulated as to appear to express Argentine opinion on the war. It was edited very cleverly in its way, but in an entirely unscrupulous fashion. It was, in fact, an out and out U-boat of journalism. Lacking a cable service, it manufactured its own daily supply of news. The opportunities it most rejoiced in were those periods when comparative calm reigned on all the fronts, and when the ordinary newspapers had little of importance to tell. Then it abounded in a perfectly appalling series of German victories and Allied disasters, and described with enthusiastic gusto the painful scenes brought about by the three-cornered and bitter enmity between Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and President Wilson!

It was quite impossible to treat *La Union* as an ordinary newspaper. It was so frankly a pirate that even its most interested supporters took it quite as a matter of course when some drastic measures were brought into force against it. The proprietors of the paper were far too "slim" to be affected for any length of time by the usual enactments of the law which, to say the least of it, were no speedier in their workings in Argentina than elsewhere. So it was determined to enforce the "Black List," and shut off the supply of paper from this organ of ill-fame.

This proved to be easier said than done. The

struggle that ensued was worthy of the pen of Conan Doyle in his most Sherlockian mood. There were times when it seemed easier to trace the slipping of a needle through a dozen haystacks than the passage of the bales of paper through Buenos Aires. *La Union* made a very strenuous hare in that momentous paper-chase. On the whole, to do it justice, it scored. But, though it held out to the last, it was only, I think, by the skin of its teeth. The quality of its paper steadily grew worse. But it continued to print to the end a story of the war that will probably rank as an intensely humorous production in those distant days when the remoteness of the tragedy will permit such lighter sides as it possessed to be more accurately judged.

In order to deal appropriately with the source of the paper supplies to *La Union* it was necessary actually to witness the receipt of the goods by that romantic institution. The sight in transit of bales which, it was morally certain, were bound for that organ, served nothing at all unless the conclusion of their wanderings were seen and testified to. And these bales were made to dodge like a half-back with the ball on the outskirts of a rugger scrum. They would pass from one warehouse to another, the waggons that held them occasionally halting for long periods outside quite friendly establishments in an attempt to create an atmosphere of unease and suspicion. Intermediate stores and cellars were leased and abandoned with a celerity that must have rendered giddy many an owner of house property in Buenos Aires. Smuggling in the old days at the base of the white Sussex cliffs of



among the red caves of South Devon was child's play to it.

And then the pace of the pursuit would slacken for the time being, and it would become known that the paper in some Maskelyne and Cooke fashion had gone home to its rest on the hard pillows of its printing presses. Sometimes undoubtedly this occurred when the watcher, by a very curious and convenient coincidence, had fallen a victim to a street row which suddenly surged about him without any apparent cause whatever. Then, of course, there were double entrances and extra corridors specially arranged for quite regardless of expense. The moral seems to be that you will get what you want, provided that you are prepared to spend sufficient money. But even now the sight of an honest lorry proceeding down Fleet Street on its lawful occasions suffices to produce a violent attack of nerves in the writer !

The attitude of the British press in South America has, of course, been so clear that it needs no comment here. It was the organs comprising this that, among their numerous other patriotic services, supplied the members of the press committees, or at all events the great majority of these, and the work and time given by these gentlemen to the service of their country undoubtedly produced very valuable results—a success that went hand in hand with that of the British Society in their organisation of film exhibitions and other arrangements of the kind.

PART II

SOME INDUSTRIAL POINTS

CHAPTER XIII

ARGENTINA

IN reviewing the general industrial and commercial position of Argentina of to-day it is necessary to take into consideration more than mere market prices and questions of supply and demand. It stands to reason that the labour market is closely associated with all considerations of the kind, and, in the case of Argentina, the political situation is just now, bound up to an unusually close extent with the industrial prospects of the Republic.

There is no doubt that the close of the war finds Argentina in a strong commercial situation. With the exception of a dearth of fuel, such inconveniences as the struggle has imposed on her have been almost entirely concerned with the luxuries of life. But even here the sense of deprivation has been small, so insignificant, indeed, that it can scarcely have been noticed by the great bulk of the population.

As it happened, stocks of almost every kind of importation from Europe were high at the beginning of the war, and for a considerable time after this the United States were enabled to supply much that Europe could no longer send. Even the

scarcity of coal resulted in a situation which must be of ultimate benefit to the country. It became necessary to exploit the northern timber districts, for the first time in a thoroughly comprehensive fashion, and the future of this industry cannot fail to benefit largely from the efforts that have been made.

When the time came for the comparative scarcity of imports to become evident, both State and private enterprise were forced to rely to a large extent on their own resources for the production of those objects which had become scarce. For this reason alone the industrial endeavours have assumed a far more comprehensive nature than has ever before been the case. This condition of affairs applies to a greater or lesser extent to almost all the industries of the Republic. It holds good not only in finance and in the enterprise of the local commercial communities, but in the lesser form of manufactures as well. In the making of leather and soft goods the advance has been particularly marked, and the very unusual spectacle has recently offered itself of shirts and leather objects of a very fair quality being sold in the Buenos Aires shops at prices which were, if anything, below those which have obtained for similar articles in establishments of much the same standing in London.

It is difficult to believe that the phase is not a passing one—indeed, were it otherwise, it is clear that the symptom would be of vital import—but the situation is a sufficiently interesting one for all that. Needless to say, the stimulus is one which nothing short of the world war could have brought about, since the Rio de la Plata region, owning

neither coal, stone, nor water power (in its central districts) does not provide the type of country from which important general manufactures might be expected.

As it is, there seems no possibility of avoiding the unpleasant fact that the ratio of values between the two countries has for the time being undergone a distinct revolution. Until some five years ago it was roughly calculated that the cost of most articles in Argentina represented double the amount at which they were obtainable in Great Britain. This is no longer so, and, indeed, the margin of difference in many cases has shrunk to a degree that perilously approaches vanishing-point. We have only to proceed a little further on the same course to enter into the extraordinary and incredible condition of affairs which will render living in South America cheaper than in England! Fortunately it is not necessary to regard any such dim and distant prospect with any real anxiety.

It is certain that Argentina has never shown any lack of enterprise in those directions which suited the inclinations of its inhabitants. On the contrary, if it has suffered from a fault in the past it has been a surfeit of this quality. The commercial history of the Republic shows that the tendency of the country has always been to advance with a slightly greater rapidity than was justified even by the very favourable circumstances in which it has usually found itself in the course of the past quarter of a century. Recent operations, however, have revealed a new spirit. The element of speculation has been absent from its markets during the period of the



war, partly, of course, from necessity, but also as the result of a new caution induced from the events of the depressing commercial situation which prevailed a few years previous to the war.

There is an interesting theory to the effect that the course of empire has always set towards the west. Whether this be accurate or not, there is no doubt that this is the direction which the flights of gold—that most essential foundation of the average empire—have taken of recent years. The position of Argentina in this respect is, of course, quite insignificant compared with that of the United States. Nevertheless, at the present time there are ample funds in the Republic, of which, it is generally allowed, there is a somewhat disproportionately large amount lodged at the banks.

It is scarcely necessary to point out, moreover, that the Republic holds enormous stocks of meat, wool, and grain, three of the products of which the Old World stands most in need. Indeed, the plentiful supply of grain may be judged from the fact—to which I have referred in a previous part of this book—that thousands of tons of maize cobs were burned for fuel in many of the engines concerned with the suburban traffic of Buenos Aires. As it is, the Argentine grain supplies continue to constitute a factor of peculiar moment to the world in general. The Bolsheviks have seen to it that one of the sources of relief in this respect should no longer be available. The vast stores of wheat with which it had been so eagerly anticipated that Russia would flood the denuded countries at the end of the war seem completely lost somewhere within the chaos

of that stricken land, a circumstance that leaves the River Plate products in a more dominant situation than ever.

Generously furnished in all these respects, therefore, it is plain that Argentina emerges from the difficult period of the war in no way crippled so far as her commercial situation is concerned. On the contrary, she has probably suffered less than any other neutral nation, and, although she is handicapped in certain respects for the moment, her future would seem more definitely assured than has ever before been the case. It is not too much to say that there is scarcely an industry from cattle-breeding to Quebracho extract, and from hotel-keeping to market-gardening that is not in a more or less flourishing condition.

A very striking piece of evidence concerning this state of affairs has recently been afforded in connection with the operations of finance. For the first time in the history of the relations between Great Britain and Argentina there have been negotiations for a loan—not from the former to the latter, but from the latter to the former ! It is true that there were special circumstances involved, and that the advance was to be employed in the purchase of foodstuffs from the River Plate. Thus it would be highly improbable to regard the negotiations as typical of what may occur in the future. Nevertheless the mere possibility of such a situation as this is sufficiently curious and instructive.

It is probably extremely difficult for many dwellers in Argentina—and the number has not been confined to the actual citizens of the Republic—to

realise the condition of affairs under which practically all the European countries have laboured. This has been graphically illustrated by the outcry which arose from time to time concerning the non-delivery or belated arrival of some spare parts of intricate British-made machines, or some other objects of the kind. In some instances this unavoidable delay was proclaimed to be a wanton piece of neglect on the part of the British of their South American trade, and in the case of motor-cars it was with some difficulty that these injured beings could be induced to believe that the spare parts were not being held back for an unreasonably large home use, for the simple reason that private motor-cars were no longer allowed to be employed! There were many instances of similar misunderstandings, all due to the fact of a want of comprehension of the real state of affairs in Europe, which, in turn, was the result of the almost total immunity of this part of the world from the direct evils of the struggle.

But it is an ideal state that has no fly in its ointment. As has been said, it is impossible to regard the commercial prospectus of the Republic without reference to the condition of labour and politics, and in neither of these respects is the outlook without its clouds. It has been pointed out earlier in this book that Argentina has not escaped the labour problem. It is true that the labour trouble in Argentina is no new thing; so much the history of the strikes for the past ten years clearly shows. It is true, too, that in some cases the concessions made by the Government and private employers have not altogether equalled those brought about in Great

Britain. Nevertheless, the situation has steadily grown more acute, largely owing to a tendency to procrastinate on the part of the authorities, just in the same way as would appear to have been the case at home.

At the present moment Argentina has become involved in a labour war. The struggle has already been conducted with considerable violence. In the case of the railways, these British-owned enterprises undoubtedly suffered in an unfair fashion from the methods of support accorded them by the Government—methods which it is difficult to regard as other than half-hearted. Until quite recently the broken glass and the bullet holes in some of the stations on the outskirts of Buenos Aires testified to a state of affairs which approached that of a siege. The end of this condition of things was the inevitable one, and drastic measures had to be employed to cope with a state of lawlessness that was increasing so rapidly as to threaten to become general. This was not effected until machine-gun bullets had swept the streets of Buenos Aires at the cost of a larger casualty roll than is generally known.

Notwithstanding these disturbances, there does not seem much ground for fear of anything approaching real Bolshevism getting the upper hand in Argentina. Despite the efforts of a number of the more recent arrivals among the immigrants from Europe, the ethics of the Republic clearly remain definitely against that particular development of the social problems of to-day, and it is extremely unlikely that the struggle will be carried, with any chance of success, outside the field of labour and



industry proper. As a State, Argentina is still sufficiently youthful and progressive to take a strong pride in its own identity. The sense of patriotism is ardently encouraged in its youth, and this alone must preserve it from the perils of the wilder species of internationalism.

The political affairs of the Republic have been dealt with in a previous chapter, but a few details may be added to the present influence of this situation on the industries of the country. The position is in many respects complex. But here, again, in some of its aspects the development of the political programme and of the moves of the various parties recalls much that has been occurring of late in the British Isles.

The Government of Argentina is now in the hands of a class of statesmen keenly interested in the undertaking of social experiments. The fall of what for the sake of simplicity might be termed the old Conservative party took place definitely—although it had been foreshadowed for some years before—on the election to office of the existing President, Doctor Irigoyen. As a result of this the Republic is now governed by the Radical party, which for the most part, although there are some sufficiently notable exceptions, finds itself out of sympathy with the ideals and views of the wealthy landowners and officials in whose care the affairs of state formerly rested. Legislation has been attempted on popular lines, and many of the older school appear to have been seriously alarmed at the threatened peril to the accepted order of society. Notwithstanding this, the actual laws passed so far have not brought

about any fundamental changes in existence. It is true that some reforms in taxation have been accomplished, but, as regards the private individual, these are of a mild order, and many of the new levies are by no means unreasonable. There are very few, for instance, who could legitimately find fault with the proposal for the institution of an income tax. There is probably no country in the world whose wealthier classes can better afford a reasonable contribution from this source.

It would seem that the spirit of the new powers that are in being is more daring than their acts. They do not appear inclined to come to too close grips with the enormously wealthy set of landowners who, although they have lost a certain amount of direct political power, still retain a great influence on the affairs of the country. This is probably on account of a realisation of the necessity of the existence of these land magnates for the prosperity of the country rather than from any dread of a contest, for in this latter respect the Government has shown itself sufficiently bold, at all events in the promulgation of its theories.

No doubt there is much to be said for the comparatively bold attitude of the new party. But it is by no means without the faults of its qualities. It is surely true that, the more enthusiastic the purely domestic reformer, the less comprehensive becomes his field of vision. In this particular instance these limitations have been somewhat severely felt by the foreign enterprises associated with the Republic. Thus, although foreign capital still remains a necessity to Argentina, there seems no

doubt that the sentiments of the Radical Government towards this weighty machinery of aid are less sympathetic than were those of its predecessors, and it is evident that its general foreign policy has been conducted on similar lines.

This trend of affairs has not met with the approval of a large number of influential Argentines who have long been accustomed to the closest political and commercial relations with Europe, more especially with Great Britain, France, and Belgium. As is pointed out in a later chapter, the situation arises largely from a theory that Argentina in the past has been unduly bled of coin for the sake of the foreigner, a supposition that is most easily disproved by a most casual survey of facts and figures in the case of the great industrial companies involved, although it is not to be denied that the private landowners, who have nothing whatever at issue with the Government, have drawn very abundant and well-earned riches from the soil of the Republic.

Having now referred to some of the main difficulties which confront Argentina from the industrial and domestic point of view, we may pass on to the brighter side of the situation. There are certain factors in intrinsic wealth which will not be denied. Even though the Republic may find itself somewhat unsettled both as regards politics and the labour question, there are compensating circumstances in plenty both in the nature of its products and the great possibilities of development which these promise.

To employ an Americanism, Argentina has the "goods." She has no need to ask the world to

buy them; it is the world's business to see that it gets them. It is quite impossible to suppose any risk, from her point of view, of a decrease in the demand for meat, wool, and grain. The question of glut, too, would seem as remote as the days when the income tax was less than a shilling in the pound. No doubt for a considerable time to come the export situation of Argentina will remain much the same as it was during the period of the war, when the price of cattle and meat invariably rose at such times when an unusually large amount of tonnage happened to become available for the purpose of carrying these stores away. An index to the situation is provided by the price of land, which has now been rising steadily for some time, and the price of "Camp" in Argentina is a commercial barometer that no one can afford to overlook. In connection with this it is interesting to note that towards the end of 1918 one of the principal British estancieros let a single estancia for a lengthy period of years at an annual rental which was equivalent to a generous amount of interest on a capital of a million sterling.

In connection with the livestock industry of Argentina a somewhat curious situation has arisen of recent years, which, it must be admitted, has produced rather disconcerting effects upon those concerned. It has long been the policy of the cattle-breeders of the River Plate to bring their stock up to the pitch nearest possible to perfection. In order to achieve this many millions of pounds have been expended, and an amazing number of the champion beasts of England have left their native



shores to graze on the pastures of the rich alluvial soil of the South. As a result of this, the herds of Argentina contain to-day a larger number of almost priceless cattle than any other country in the world.

In the course of the war a discovery was made that came as a shock to the Argentine breeders. The demand for meat for the use of the troops was, of course, enormous, and no fault could be found with this circumstance from the producer's point of view. On the other hand, it was found in the trenches that the very best class of beef, the meat of the animal rolling in substance and fat, was not suitable for the rough-and-ready cooking which had to be carried out in the strenuous surroundings of the French and Flanders fronts. Complaints came that the stews made under these conditions from the meat of the lordly creatures of the *Campo* were found to be floating in grease. Demands became urgent for quite lean and skinny meat, and the word was passed that it was this quality that was required.

The practical results of this were gall and wormwood to the South American breeder, who soon found that the poorest animals were fetching practically the same price—and occasionally even more—in the markets of Buenos Aires as his finest and sleekest bullocks. All incentive towards the improvement of breed seemed to have vanished for the time being, and the complaints were naturally loud and long from many of those whose life-long work bade fair to be shattered by this revolution in values. But that it was fully understood that this was no more than a passing phase was very clearly

evidenced at the great agricultural show at Palermo in 1918, the finest of the kind, it was universally allowed by experts of various nationalities, that the world has ever seen. Here, the prices for fine cattle exceeded anything that had ever been experienced before even in Argentina, that land of lavish expenditure in such directions.

Somewhat prodigal though the Argentine has always shown himself in some respects, there is no extravagance in this enormous outlay, any more than there is in providing costly seed for a soil that is worthy to raise it. It has merely been proved that this is the most profitable procedure to secure the finest financial returns. It is now left only to the outlying lands of the far North and South to be cumbered by comparatively inferior breeds of cattle. The central plains, amazingly rich in grass and alfalfa, refuse to have any concern with any other creatures but the finest Durhams, Herefords, and the like.

Indeed, there seems no doubt, reviewing the entire set of circumstances, that the possibilities of Argentina in the near future are very great. It is true that the provinces of the Republic, when compared with the gigantic States of Brazil, have but a limited area of completely unexploited country remaining, although the districts of the far North and South would provide more than sufficient to satisfy many a European country. On the other hand, the stability of her existing industries has been vastly increased, while their ramifications are rapidly extending. The new railway communications which now afford a link with Chile, Brazil, Uruguay,

Paraguay, Bolivia, and Peru have done more than make matters easy for the ordinary traveller; they have opened up new markets for Argentina which have already begun to stand her in good stead.

It is probably not generally realised in England that the demand for meat and grain is very important both in those extensive sub-tropical and mining regions of the southern half of the Latin continent which possess neither grazing nor agricultural facilities. Such large areas of these are now being placed at the disposal of Argentine exporters as to do away with the last chance of Argentine foodstuff supplies ever exceeding the demand—a contingency that, as has been said, would in any case be sufficiently distant.

As it happens, the circumstances of the war have been of benefit, not only to the staple products of Argentina, but to a certain number of its minor industries as well. The number of the famous vineyards of Europe that have suffered, either from direct damage or from an almost complete want of labour, is lamentable to contemplate. The wine-producing district of Mendoza in the west of Argentina, on the other hand, has continued steadily to expand, to such an extent, indeed, that the trade has now become an important one. Thus the Republic finds itself in the situation of being able not only to fill from its own vats the gaps in the importations of the cheaper wines from Europe, but even if necessary to make good to a certain extent the shortage of wine abroad.

Other lesser industries of the kind which have made marked progress during recent years include

those of fruit-canning, biscuit manufacturing, and even such comparatively new enterprises as the making of quite admirable types of chocolate and sweetmeats of an exceptionally good quality. Indeed, as regards the local industrial progress of the Republic, a recent statement by one of the British advertisement agents in Buenos Aires is instructive. This was to the effect that when in the course of the war the British advertisements of necessity fell away to a considerable extent, he found the returns of his business compensated by the great increase in the advertisements of locally made goods.

Probably no country in the world has yielded a greater return for up-to-date private enterprise than Argentina. In this respect it would be unwise in the extreme to overlook the influence which must be exercised on her industries by the extraordinary range of war inventions which are now being adapted to the purposes of peace. It is sufficiently plain that in no direction will this be more evident than that of transport. The basis of Argentine prosperity may be said to rest on the introduction of pedigree cattle and of alfalfa, the invention of the processes of freezing and chilling meat, the discovery of the wheat belt—and, last but by no means least, on the introduction of modern communications and transport facilities.

No country in the world has proved itself more susceptible to these latter advantages, and, when caressed by the smoke of the railway engine, it has blossomed like the rose! The work, therefore, that is destined to be achieved by the latest forms of invention should be taken into consideration, not



as one of the dim and problematical future, but as one which will come into being almost at once. It is quite certain that Argentina will not consent to remain behind Europe and the United States in this respect for a day longer than is absolutely essential.

Undoubtedly the two of these new features which must play the most important part in the industrial development of the Republic are the latest types of motor vehicle, designed to deal with rough country, and the aeroplane. With regard to the former it is now fairly generally known that one of the chief problems which the dwellers in the rich alluvial plains have had to face ever since the hostile Indians were driven from their surface is the making of efficient and durable roads from a soil which is entirely innocent of stone—even of so much as a pebble. Winter traffic along an ordinary “Camp” road here is liable to bore into the soft soil a depth of ruts of which the inhabitants of the muddiest districts at home can have small conception. Even the summer’s sun, though it may produce clouds of dust, has the effect of hardening them into permanency rather than of smoothing out their awkward angles.

The effects of this on the ordinary motor vehicle may be easily imagined, and very few of these have been able in the past to cope satisfactorily with the innumerable pitfalls offered by the difficult surface. It is true that of late considerable ingenuity has been shown in the construction of the more important mud highways. Light railways, moreover, have been utilised as much as possible. Both of these expedients, nevertheless, leave something to

be desired, the former in permanency and the latter in economy. The solution of the difficulty would certainly seem to lie in the latest types of motors, evolved in the course of the war, that are capable of forcing their way at will through deep mud or across the roughest of surfaces. For the carriage from the estancia to the railway-station of wool, grain, and other such freights they would render invaluable service. To one ignorant of the nature of "Camp" soil the matter may seem comparatively trivial. Nevertheless, the annual financial benefit would amount to a greater number of millions sterling than even the most optimistic would care to forecast.

As regards the aeroplane, which is now, of course, one of the most valuable commercial assets, it is certain that the dead flat country which used formerly to be known as the "Pampas" affords one of the finest flying areas in the world. It is no exaggeration to say that for hundreds of miles—save for those places where exist the plantations of peach, poplar, paraiso, and those occasional spots where the estanciero has been more lavish in his general arboriculture—there is scarcely a square yard where the aviator cannot descend in, humanly speaking, the most perfect safety.

This branch of industry, it should be said, is one in which the Argentines are already interesting themselves very keenly. For the purposes of mail-carrying between the Republic and the neighbouring States of Chile and Uruguay, this method of transport is almost certain to be employed in the near future. In the case of the former of these neigh-

bours it would have the advantage of metaphorically flattening the formidable heights of the Cordillera; in that of the latter the obstacle to speed introduced by the intervening great river would disappear.

It was naturally impossible for the Argentines to obtain any new aeroplanes of any value after the year 1914, although their army possessed a few machines previous to that date. As a proof of their enthusiasm for the new method of transport, however, it may be said that one of the residents in Buenos Aires constructed a machine of his own—and there may be others who have done the same for all I know—and occasionally flew it over the racecourse at Palermo, when a meeting was in progress. At the present moment there is not a little impatience evinced for the arrival of up-to-date machines, and, as Great Britain at present holds the world's lead in their manufacture, there is probably no field in which the future for British aeroplanes is more promising.

As regards general trade, it is surely a platitude to say that the great southern continent, and most especially Argentina and the neighbouring Republics, must now be the field of battle of all nations for that commerce for which every unit of the industrial world is now a competitor. The most prominent among the later aspirants, as is explained elsewhere, are the North Americans. But the fact must not be lost to sight that the latest competitors of all are the Japanese, who, although they have arrived in far lesser numbers, are already making their presence felt. Beyond the importation of Japanese goods into the Republic, they are specialising in

banking, and are taking a very keen interest in the foundation of new steamship lines. Undoubtedly the competition which they will one day offer will be very powerful and very far-reaching.

Perhaps a word will not be out of place concerning one of the innumerable ramifications of British trade with Argentina: the setting up of large British shopping establishments in Buenos Aires. It has been proved in the transport world of South America that the *railway line makes the traffic*, and that the traffic, when made, seldom fails to prove larger than had been anticipated. Very much the same applies to this other branch of industry. The local offer of the various commodities has already been shown to create a more extensive market than had been foreseen, although there have been periods, it is true, when general conditions have not made it possible to take full advantage of this. In Argentina the growth of the cities, and especially of Buenos Aires, is equalled by the rapidity with which the tastes of the average Argentine are developing, and with which his demands are growing. In view of all this, and of the prosperity of the Republic, any further reasonable ventures of the kind, provided that they are amply furnished with capital, should meet with ultimate success.

It is practically a century now since the pioneer British sailed to Argentina to take up land in the then infant Republic. Since that time the popularity of the country as a settling ground for the youth of England has steadily increased, and the insignificance of the figure of those who have failed in their task is, I think, unique in the history of all



such ventures. At the present moment the popularity of Argentina as a settling ground promises to become greater than ever, and just now, at the period of uncertainty which follows the conclusion of the war, there are certainly many thousands of men who are turning their thoughts towards the attractions of the River Plate.

In connection with this a word of warning is essential. It is safe to say that the opportunities of "making good" are as frequent as ever in Argentina, possibly more so than ever before. But they are not to be approached in the casual fashion of old—which frequently led men to fortune in a fashion that they themselves had little expected. Argentina has gone with the times, and the changes even during the last half-dozen years have been noteworthy. It is no longer possible to take up "camp" more or less where one chooses as was at one time the case, and to settle down on the land without further ado, with merely the most modest amount of capital at one's back. For any such purposes land is no longer available save in the remotest districts of the bleak south and sub-tropical north. The rest has been absorbed, and to enter into possession of any of its acres a capital sum of many thousands of pounds is necessary.

Thus the road to fortune for those who can bring to bear no more than a thousand or two of pounds has become longer and more devious. But it still exists. Before entering upon it in these days, however, it is essential to leave practically nothing to chance, and, before sailing southwards, to have arranged for some definite apprenticeship on the

spot. Otherwise disillusion and loss may well result.

It is the same with those in search of occupation in Buenos Aires. In the present circumstances an Englishman arriving in the capital unprepared for eventualities may, or may not, find the billet he desires within a reasonable period. If he fail, Buenos Aires represents no cheap backwater in which he may repose at his ease until his hopes fructify! The experience, at the best, may be costly in the extreme. In spite of that the fact remains that the town offers more opportunities of money-making than any other place of its size in the world, provided that the necessary precautions are taken at the start, and that some arrangement be come to before starting on the voyage. It is merely a matter of not attempting to go out with the hounds before making sure of your mount!

There is one other matter, too, to be taken into consideration by those who contemplate trying their fortune in the lands of the River Plate. There are very few first posts of an immediately alluring financial nature awaiting the youthful and inexperienced new-comers. In almost every case the emoluments of the beginner are on a strictly modest scale. To one determined to succeed this circumstance need afford no discouragement. For the wealthy areas of Argentina, although they refuse to reveal their full possibilities to the stranger, more than compensate for the delay by the rewards they are wont to yield to one who has had the patience and skill to obtain a working knowledge of the conditions of the country.

## CHAPTER XIV

### URUGUAY

URUGUAY holds at least one record among its sister States. It is the smallest Republic in South America. It would certainly hold another record for the excellence of its climate, were it not that the claims of Chile in this respect make it doubtful which of the countries is most favoured in the matter of a kindly sun and bracing breezes.

In any case the importance of Uruguay is not to be judged by its area. As an investing ground for British capital it holds the third place among the States of the entire continent, and this, after all, is a matter of no small concern. Apart from its considerable commercial assets it is essentially a pleasant country from a physical point of view. Its pasture lands roll gently from the shores of the River Plate and Uruguay rivers in continually increasing undulations northwards to the frontiers of Brazil. In this feature it differs entirely from the central plains of Argentina, though nothing but the waters of the great river intervene between the two. It is difficult to compare any landscape in South America with that of England. But were any such rash feat to be attempted Uruguay might be likened to the Sussex Downs, and Central Argentina to the East Coast Fens, or even to the Weald of Surrey, if one

can imagine this latter rigidly flattened and shorn of its trees !

Uruguay has been generously endowed not only in her possessions, but also in the matter of her geographical situation. As regards international trade its position is peculiarly advantageous. Situated on what might be termed the main line of South American steamer traffic, with her chief town occupying the most important strategic point on the estuary of the Rio de la Plata, the small Republic enjoys, after Brazil, the second place in point of convenience in communications of all the South American States.

Uruguay, indeed, in the majority of respects, may be regarded as an exceptionally fortunate country. Unlike Paraguay and Bolivia, it has never been perplexed concerning marine transport; it possesses the advantage over the central plains of Argentina in that there is ample stone at hand for the construction of highways, while the topography of a land that is either fertile or mineral-bearing offers no serious obstacles to railway construction in any of its districts, from Montevideo in the South to Rivera on the Brazilian frontier.

It has frequently been a source of wonder how Uruguay, with all these advantages, and populated, moreover, by an energetic race of people living in a fine climate, has not shown a greater degree of commercial and industrial progress than has actually been the case. It must not be implied from this that the advance has not been definite and very considerable. As a matter of fact, this has never been more apparent than in quite recent years.



Nevertheless, when the history of the State for the past half century has been surveyed, it becomes clear that the progress effected has not been commensurate with the great promise of the land.

The main cause of this comparative lagging behind in the past is to be met with in the state of political unrest which has characterised the affairs of Uruguay for a period that may now be counted almost by centuries. The origin of this has not invariably been internal. The *Banda Oriental* has suffered the inevitable penalty of finding itself a small buffer State between two such great Republics as those of Argentina and Brazil, whose jealousies in times gone by have frequently overflowed on to the soil of Uruguay, and made battle-fields on account of ambitions that were foreign to the pastures that witnessed them. At a later period—one which has lasted, indeed, until only a few years ago, but which, one hopes, is now definitely relegated to the limbo of history—the civil wars between the two great rival parties, the *Blancos* and the *Colorados*, absorbed an amount of wealth and lives which might well have been devoted to more peaceful objects.

It is necessary to lay some stress on these matters of the past, since they clearly account for so much of the present financial situation of the Republic. It is nine years ago since the writer made the following remarks, which he will repeat as a preliminary to a survey of the conditions of to-day:

“He would be no real friend of Uruguay who strove to show that the march of the country had not been rudely arrested on innumerable occasions. Indeed, were it not for the conditions that have

prevailed for centuries, the actual forward steps that the Republic has effected would be far less remarkable than is actually the case. The history of Uruguay reveals a continuous medley of peace and war. Its swords have been beaten into ploughshares and welded back again into lethal weapons ere the metal had cooled from the force of the former operation.

“Each of such transformations, moreover, has occurred at intervals sufficiently short to destroy utterly the hopes and prosperity of an ordinary people. Over and over again the Uruguayans have strewn the battle-fields with their dead; yet during each interval they have continued to plant the soil with its proper and more profitable seed. An extraordinary vitality on the part of the people joined to the natural wealth of the land have been the factors by means of which the small Republic has brushed away the results of its wars as lightly as though such convulsions were summer showers.”

The fact remains, nevertheless, of a lamentable loss of opportunities in these earlier days—a loss for which the country is undoubtedly doing its best to atone now. Uruguay was clearly intended for a prosperous country. There is probably no more ideal grazing land in the world than is afforded by its gently rolling soil. In agriculture and fruit-growing—more especially in its rich south-western districts—the State has already given some proofs of what it is capable, and although the mineral fields have not yet justified to the full the hopes of the confirmed optimists, very few really extensive trials have so far been made in this direction.

In the days of the Jesuit Indian missions, which occupied the north of Uruguay as well as parts of

Paraguay and Argentina, there were numerous charges brought against the heads of these establishments of accumulating vast riches from concealed mines. But no traces of these alleged workings have ever been revealed, and it seems certain that these accusations were founded on a myth.

The prosperity of Uruguay, however, does not necessarily depend in the least on its gold, copper, iron, manganese, silver, marble, gypsum, asbestos, slate, sulphur, nor on its considerable quantities of amethysts and topazes, and rare specimens of rubies and diamonds. Like Argentina, the Republic owns a bottomless mine in its stores of cattle and sheep, and in the comparatively limited areas which abound in wheat, maize, and linseed. On the whole, it may be said, moreover, that in the more sparsely populated land of the *Banda Oriental* there has been less tendency than in Argentina to convert pastoral into agricultural land, an omission which, in the present state of the world's meat markets, may well prove extremely profitable to the lesser State.

Uruguay, of course, must be regarded primarily as a cattle-breeding country. At the present moment a correct estimate of the herds of any of the South American Republics is extremely difficult to obtain, owing to the world-wide disturbance of the meat markets, and to the intermittency, and at the same time the urgency, of the calls that have been made upon the cattle of the respective States. But if a very rough census of the Uruguayan cattle were taken, it would probably result in a total of somewhere about eight million head, which compares very favourably with the thirty million or so of cattle

possessed both by Argentina and Brazil, when the great difference in the respective areas of the three countries is taken into consideration. The twenty-six million Uruguayan sheep, moreover, compare a little more favourably with the total of the Argentine flocks, and are considerably more than double those of Brazil—which is not so surprising as it may sound, in view of the tropical nature of such enormous stretches of the latter State.

It will be evident from this that there remains very little pastoral land in the *Banda Oriental* to be developed, or, more accurately, to be settled, in the same way that so many outlying districts in Argentina, and the greater part of the interior of Brazil, still await the pioneer's axe and plough. The future of the important Uruguayan pastoral industry clearly lies in a continued improvement of the existing conditions rather than in any possibility of branching out in new directions. As a matter of fact, there is ample scope for the former process for, although the country is settled from end to end, its population is very sparse, and, so long as human conditions remain as they are, the development of the Republic beyond a certain point must remain impossible.

It is not a little amazing, having regard to its advantages of soil, climate, and natural wealth, that the population of the seventy-two thousand square miles of Uruguay should not yet have attained to a total of one million and a half. It is true that Argentina possesses no more than eight million souls to people her eleven hundred thousand and odd square miles. But the discrepancy is far greater than



appears on paper. Many of the vast Argentine districts, such as those of the Chaco and of the far south, cannot, from physical reasons rather than on account of their remote situation, be brought into full operation for a long time to come. Uruguay, as has been said, has no comparatively unexplored reserves of the kind. All her soil is ready to hand, and is capable of immediate development.

In the past there is no doubt that Uruguay has suffered not a little as regards the attraction of immigrants, as well as in other respects of national importance, from the circumstance of being overshadowed in the public mind by the fame of Argentina. Nevertheless, the *Banda Oriental* is an ideal country for that type of immigrant—by no means so general a class as is popularly supposed—who is by temperament fitted to succeed in South America. It is true that the small Republic does not afford the scope for those gigantic enterprises as characterise the commercial efforts in Argentina and Brazil. On the other hand, there is both room and need for private effort of a smaller kind, and this in central districts, moreover, which in the case of the greater Republics would already have been more or less definitely parcelled out among the overwhelmingly important industrial and commercial companies.

British interests in Uruguay are chiefly centred in railways, land, municipal enterprises, and, of course, in ocean transport, while the fine river steamer service, of practically all the navigable reaches of the Rio de la Plata, Uruguay, Paraná, and Paraguay rivers, is owned by a British company. This has recently acquired some really

splendid steamers, which render the river voyages extremely comfortable. The railways, too, are as ably managed as those of Argentina and Brazil, which is saying a good deal for their efficiency. So far there have been few ventures in Montevideo in the way of those large British stores and shops which have become so marked a feature of Buenos Aires, and which are now, I believe, contemplated on a similar scale in Rio de Janeiro.

The capital of Uruguay, like so many other features of that Republic, has, indeed, suffered in a sense from the propinquity of the great urban centre of Buenos Aires. It has long been the fashion for those undertaking the more ambitious shopping expeditions to make the night's journey across the river to Buenos Aires for this purpose, with the result that the Montevideo establishments have found themselves deprived of a good deal of natural incentive to enterprise. This condition of affairs is now rapidly altering, and, with its present population of nearly four hundred thousand inhabitants, possessed of a high average of wealth, the opportunities for branching out in such directions are considerable.

The travelling representatives of British firms have in the past tended to work on lines similar to these. That is to say, they have frequently been so absorbed in the business interests of Buenos Aires that they have failed to pay sufficient attention to the needs of the Uruguayan capital on the other side of the river. In the future it will undoubtedly be necessary to set aside a reasonable amount of time for a visit to the latter town, which is so rapidly

growing in size and importance. An index to the changing conditions is to be met with in the cost of living. Some years ago Montevideo was regarded as a pleasant, rather sleepy, town in which existence was far cheaper than in Buenos Aires. It is true that the life in the former town has not yet attained to the pace which characterises that of the latter, although it has increased greatly in intensity during recent years. The cost of living, nevertheless, has increased by leaps and bounds.

The majority of people now seem to consider that, of the two towns, Montevideo is the more expensive as regards the cost of existence. This is probably a somewhat exaggerated view, but it may be taken that neither capital has much advantage over the other in this respect. The circumstance arises in the first place from the commercial prosperity of the Uruguayan town, and, secondly, from the fact that the spot has now become a favourite summer resort of the inhabitants of Buenos Aires, who have taken to flock there in large numbers to enjoy the bracing sea breezes and the bathing facilities, both of which are lacking in Buenos Aires.

The city itself is very well laid out, and its appearance in many respects is midway between that of Buenos Aires and Rio, which, of course, is more or less appropriate to its geographical situation. Thus, although it lacks those great boulevards which are characteristic of the former, it is also without any streets as narrow as the generality of those of the latter. If it is innocent of the mountain scenery of Rio, its surface knows nothing of that dead flat area upon which Buenos Aires spreads itself. Alto-

gether, with its numerous fine residences, its tree-planted roads, its pleasant plazas, and the views of the sea which are obtainable from the higher spots, there is very much to recommend it in the way of its urban attractions.

But, from the visitor's point of view, the chief source of the city's popularity undoubtedly lies in its outskirts. Many districts here have been so generously planted with eucalyptus, pine trees, and other growths as to give a completely sylvan appearance to the neighbourhood, and it is amid these pleasant surroundings that a large number of villas have been constructed in a fashion that shows a distinct appreciation of the æsthetic. The bathing resorts themselves, of which one of the chief is Poçitos, have the advantage of a similar background, to say nothing of most imposing parades, and some large and modern hotels.

Between Poçitos and the main city has now been established an elaborate Casino, devoted to the cult of roulette and the usual run of the games of chance. It is an ably conducted establishment that takes itself very solemnly and seriously, but, quite apart from any losses that may be incurred in play, it cannot be regarded as a spot in which to spend an inexpensive hour, and is entirely free from any cheap-jack ambitions, in all things from its price of admission to the cost of the meals it provides. But the average visitor does not enter halls such as these in order to economise, and the somewhat magnificent spot must require all that it takes in the way of cash for its upkeep.

All this, however, is more or less by the way, and



it is time to return for a brief space to those national industries proper which have assisted to bring into being these other features of mere luxury. There is little more to be said concerning these save that Uruguay should have a ready market for her minerals of common and everyday use, such, for instance, as marble and stone, for it is a remarkable fact that, whereas these abound on the *Banda Oriental* side of the great river, the province of Buenos Aires, on the opposite coast, is constituted almost entirely of an alluvial soil that is innocent of a solitary pebble, a circumstance that militates largely against the building schemes of the Argentine capital.

Nevertheless, all such industries, although their development should go to swell the funds of the Republic, must be of very minor consideration, when compared with the pastoral interests which stand for the real wealth of Uruguay. In view of the present favourable situation of the meat market—and it is difficult to see what circumstances can alter this for very many years to come—Uruguay can very well afford to confine her attention to her cattle and sheep, and let her lesser industries look after themselves. Indeed, with her comparative dearth of population, she has practically no choice in the matter, since every available unit of her insufficient manpower must necessarily be told off to the land.

I have already referred at some length to the influence of politics on industries which has been so marked a feature of the Uruguayan past, and it is necessary, ere concluding, briefly to return to this subject. It is a curious fact that, notwithstanding the numerous political disturbances that

have occurred, the commerce of the Republic has almost throughout remained steady, suffering neither from such abrupt rises and falls as has the trade of its neighbours to the south and north: Argentina and Brazil. This, in its way, is a good sign for the future, which now reveals a brighter promise of peace than has ever before been the lot of the Republic.

Indeed, the policy of the Uruguayan Government has of recent years shown a marked degree of moderation and wisdom, and the election of the new President, Doctor Brum—who as a prelude to his assuming office paid an official visit to the United States—gives rise to the highest hopes. At the same time there is no denying the fact that of late Uruguay has been reaping the whirlwind as a result of the policy of some former Governments, which, while indulging in some daring but intelligent social experiments, committed the unwisdom of providing a certain amount of tacit encouragement to strikes among the employés of the foreign-owned industrial companies situated in the Republic. Whichever side may have been in the right, there is no doubt that the open official partiality displayed during a former period on those occasions was responsible for much subsequent labour unrest. This, towards the middle of 1918, culminated in actual street fighting between the military and the strikers. This collision was the result of a firm policy on the part of the authorities, who showed themselves completely resolute in maintaining order. At the same time it must be said that the labour situation in Uruguay, at its worst, has never been so serious as that which has prevailed in Argentina.

With the horizon brighter—although not completely clear—in this respect, there seems very little that can stay the steady progress of Uruguay. There are some important circumstances, moreover, which should not be overlooked in estimating the future of the *Banda Oriental*. With the rapid development of the South American railways, the strategic importance of the Republic as an area of transport must necessarily become accentuated. With Montevideo, geographically speaking, as the natural chief port of the Rio de la Plata estuary, she must in the near future tap very much more of the produce of the interior of the continent than is at present the case, notwithstanding the fact that the astonishing development of the ports in the far south of Brazil must have somewhat dashed her hopes of dealing with the transport of the rich regions to the north of her frontiers.

It has been the opinion of many people that Uruguay must eventually be drawn in the political sense nearer to one or the other of her great neighbours, and those holding this theory have frequently been given to wonder whether racial affinity would overcome the barrier of the great river and lead her to the south, or whether the influence of her geographical situation would cause her to link her fortunes with those of Brazil. In the past this problem has played a great part, but it is now, I think, destined to sink into insignificance, since it seems certain that the small but vigorous State is fated to stand alone.

Indeed, those who still take this question of absorption or amalgamation seriously would seem

oblivious of the deep national sentiment which has now been long rooted in Uruguay—a sentiment that made her act for herself at the crisis of the great war, when she broke off relations with the Central Powers in a spirited fashion that won the applause, but not in every case the imitation, of all the other South American Republics. As usual, too, Uruguay has proved herself whole-hearted in her sympathies. When Admiral Caperton, in command of the United States squadron, paid his first visit to Montevideo after the declaration of the smaller Republic, the horses were taken from his carriage and the Allied officer was drawn through the streets by a cheering crowd. Now it is not too much to say that the sympathies of the Uruguayans are at the very least as warmly directed towards the British as towards the Americans. With the political relations on the excellent footing they enjoy, it surely only remains to cultivate the closest commercial intercourse—a process which might be initiated on the part of commercial representatives by making Montevideo a more frequent port of call !

Had cities souls instead of being the mere lifeless shells of packed humanity, there is no doubt that Montevideo would bear a considerable grudge against Buenos Aires. There is no doubt that the events of history have given to the latter advantages which the respective geographical situations of the two do not justify. In short, as a port, Buenos Aires has usurped the position which nature had intended for Montevideo ! The blame for this rests entirely on the early history of the River Plate, which so fated events that long after the Argentine shores were



in the full course of development the Uruguayan lands continued at the mercy of the fierce Charrúa Indians, who resisted the incursions of the Spaniards in a most desperate manner.

This anomaly will be plainly evident to anyone who has entered both harbours. That of Montevideo stands out boldly on the edge of the great estuary, its situation clearly marked by the last real hill on the banks of the river that the eye of man may rest on for a thousand miles or so upstream. The ocean-going steamer of practically any reasonable tonnage, approaching the spot, has nothing further to do than to enter the outer harbour, pass from there to the inner waters, and to sidle up against the wharf, to be tied up in security.

On the other hand, if a vessel be bound beyond this point to Buenos Aires, she will have a far less rapid and simple landfall. Leaving the coast of Uruguay, where the waters are only faintly tinged with the mud of the river, she will plough her way for eight hours or so along an amazingly narrow channel in the mass of browning waters. It used to be said in joke that the finest method of scraping the hulls of large steamers was to send them on a voyage up the Rio de la Plata. There may possibly be some actual truth in this, for it is certain that from time to time their keels slide over the soft bottom itself of the river with a reluctant movement that sends its throbs all over the ship.

Even when, at the end of this lengthy passage through the lines of coloured buoys, the very lowly shore of Buenos Aires appears—though its new lofty buildings now mark it out more plainly against

the skyline—all trouble is not necessarily at an end. Should an unfavourable wind chance to be blowing the water out of the river, as happens on certain occasions during the year, it is possible that the watermark at the docks will be too low to admit the largest type of passenger steamer designed for the route, and that it will be necessary to wait for a time before making port.

An episode such as this, although sufficiently rare, is by no means unknown. It is liable to occur, moreover, even after the incalculable amount of pains, skill, capital and labour that has been spent in making the port as serviceable as it is. One can tame cataracts, mountains, and even, up to a certain point, the edge of the wildest coast. But there is nothing more intangible and elusive than the waters of a broad, muddy, and shallow river that roll slowly on, seemingly with little other aim than continually to silt up the channels delved by man.

But the choice has been made, and the port of Buenos Aires, in the same way as its town, stands as a monument to human energy. It is possible that in the course of centuries—if by that time the circumstances of aerial development should leave any ships on the sea!—the natural advantages of Montevideo will assert their supremacy over the difficult situation in Buenos Aires. As it is, there is ample room for both, as is evidenced by their respective striking development.

The British population of Uruguay is not large, numbering as it does under fifteen hundred all told, of whom the greater part are residents of Montevideo. Outside the boundaries of the capital, how-

ever, the area of British-owned land probably approaches three-quarters of a million acres, a sufficiently important asset in the affairs of the Republic. The principal of these holdings are in the south-west, where the pastoral lands are of very fine quality, and where the neighbourhood of the Uruguay River and its tributaries assists not a little in the convenience of transport.

Life on the Uruguayan *Campo* is very similar to that in Argentina, and, except for some minor differences in the popularity of the various breeds of cattle, the habits and customs of the two are almost identical. So far as landscape and the pleasantness of the natural surroundings are concerned, the dweller in Uruguay has probably rather the best of it, but to the keen stock-breeder such considerations as these naturally do not come as vital factors.

Almost the entirety of the Uruguayan "Camp" is pastoral land, but there are many opportunities for the small-holder in the south-west of the Republic who desires to undertake the production of cereals and fruit-growing on a modest scale. The banks of the Uruguay and of the lesser streams afford some admirable ground for these purposes, and, concurrently with the increase in the town populations, there should be no reason why this industry should not develop into very important proportions.

Another enterprise which has proved profitable in many parts of the country is that of afforestation. The virgin soil of Uruguay has never been quite so devoid of tree life as that of Central Argentina; nevertheless, it was sufficiently sparsely covered with

the weightier forms of vegetation. A certain amount has now been achieved in the way of altering these conditions, and afforestation has now been conducted with especial success on the sandy stretches of the east coast.

The first venture of the kind was undertaken by Mr. Henry Burnett, the British vice-consul at Maldonado, in 1909, when, after much trouble and not a few discouraging experiments, he induced a forest of maritime pines to flourish on the shore, receiving a gold medal and a bonus of three thousand pesos as a well-deserved reward for his enterprise. The great increase in the worth of the land thus treated has attracted considerable attention to this form of afforestation, which receives the keen encouragement of the Government. But even up to the present time only an infinitesimal part of the field available has been touched, and the opportunities for further developments in this direction would seem very promising.

It is only quite recently that the more advanced Republics of South America have turned their attention to the problems of local manufacturing in its modern forms—a procedure which, as I have already explained—has been largely forced upon them by the circumstances of the European War. So far not very much has been effected in this direction by the Uruguayans, principally owing to the comparative dearth of population that has already been referred to. At the same time it should be remarked that, from the physical point of view, the smaller Republic is more favourably placed in this respect than is Argentina. That is to say, such water power as she



possesses is available at lesser distances from her main centres; her natural facilities for transport are greater, while the geographical compactness of the country must also prove an advantageous circumstance in this respect.

Indeed, apart from the problem of population, should coal ever be found in important quantities in Uruguay, the manufacturing prospects of the Republic could not fail to be considerable. As a matter of fact, certain districts exist in which traces of good coal have been met with; but no really exhaustive search for this valuable mineral seems yet to have been undertaken.

The first important relations of the British with Uruguay were established in 1806, and proved of a somewhat turbulent order, since in that year the British Expeditionary Force to the River Plate besieged the town and captured it. At the time it was considered that the occupation would be permanent, and a large number of British merchants sailed out to take advantage of the situation.

The occupation of the Uruguayan capital, as a matter of fact, was destined to last for no longer than a year or so, but the time was sufficient for each of the two races to prove their sterling qualities to the other, and the relations which had been opened by a condition of war became surprisingly close, and ended by founding a genuine friendship between the two—a result which, as recent history shows, does not invariably spring from such international circumstances !

Since the establishment of the independence of the Republic a few years later the intercourse

between the two nations has been continuous, and, on the whole, has been marked by a quite unusual degree of harmony. As in the case of Argentina, it is the prospect of settling on the land that has attracted the majority of the younger English residents to the shores of the western bank of the Rio de la Plata, and, although there has been no opportunity of accumulating fortunes from this source on a scale as vast as that in the sister Republic, the results have been eminently satisfactory. Until comparatively recent years it is true that there have been some occasional disadvantages connected with this particular occupation at the times when civil war was rife. Then, the opposing armies were given to levy toll on the estanciero's horses, and occasionally even given to use fence posts for firewood, to say nothing of impressing the services for their cause of those *peones* who were Uruguayan citizens.

It is only fair to say, however, that these methods were resorted to as a general rule from the force of what the leaders considered necessity in a rough-and-ready period. Unless he had unwisely mixed himself in local politics, the neutrality of the foreign estanciero was freely allowed on all hands and he had nothing to fear beyond the inconvenience caused by the damage to his property—which an ordinary display of tact would cause to be minimised to the utmost possible extent.

So far as it is possible to foresee anything at all in a world of continually growing surprises, it is only reasonable to suppose that those days are entirely of the past, and that this barrier to progress has been removed from a land of fine soil, charming climate, and friendly inhabitants.

## CHAPTER XV

### SOUTHERN BRAZIL

FROM the period of its first colonisation Brazil has always been considered, and very rightly, as a land of vast possibilities. In the popular imagination it has been pictured quite generally as a country chiefly famous for diamonds and nuts, and it certainly possesses both of these articles—many more of the latter than of the former, it may be said ! At a more recent period both the coffee and rubber industries have been brought into considerable prominence, but the resources of Brazil are by no means limited even to such products as these.

As a matter of fact, Brazil is one of the few States remaining in the world, of which it may be said with truth that very little beyond its fringe has yet been exploited. Among its vast territories are many great stretches which are practically unknown, and which may, for all the outer world knows, contain mineral wealth and industrial possibilities of a sort which may make those who first chance upon them rich beyond the dreams of avarice—a state that is apparently more usual in theory than in practice.

As it is, the mystery of the vast unknown portions of Brazil must very shortly disappear, and then the curtain will have been withdrawn from the last

lands on the earth which have hitherto baffled the explorer—with the exception, of course, of those regions that are ice rather than soil.

It is not usual to begin a survey of a country by considering its prospects from the air. But this new and bird's-eye aspect of affairs should be seriously taken into consideration in the case of Brazil. I have already referred to the prospects of the aeroplane in Argentina. A similar outlook naturally confronts this form of transport in Brazil, although the latter Republic lacks the supreme advantages offered by the stretching plains to the south of its borders. But in some respects the aeroplane will perform services in Brazil which are no longer possible in Argentina. It will have carried out in a very few years from now the task that in a previous—and completely recent—age would have entailed the life work, and would in many cases have cost the lives themselves, of hundreds of explorers.

Indeed, the prospects that the aeroplane opens out in the remote regions of Brazil are fascinating to contemplate. They are the first instruments of travel that can make light of the dense walls of matted forest that up to the present time have guarded the secrets of the country that lies behind them. They will hum serenely over the solitudes that have hitherto been sacred to the jaguar, puma, monkey, and all their kindred spirits, to say nothing of the occasional Indian, no doubt much to the consternation of all. There will undoubtedly be many frenzied chatterings and flutterings among the leaves as the terrified simian troops go plunging down-



wards to earth at the sound of the first engine's purr, and perhaps a few Indians in angry panic will let fly their arrows at the strange monster above, as some of the tribes were wont to do at the sun when it suffered from an eclipse, thinking to free it from a supposed giant dog of the skies that was eating up its brilliance.

But such little surprises as these are only of local interest! The aeroplane explorer himself will have very little concern with them. It will be his business to map the land, to follow the course of streams, to note down the areas of potential pasture, to take note of mountain range and valleys, and country that might, or might not, prove rich in minerals. They will be peculiarly fortunate beings, those who find themselves told off to this task, for they will be the last of the explorers of genuine virgin country, and they will have set the seal upon the entire business for good and all.

With these remoter regions, however, we are not at present concerned. The entire Republic, indeed, is too vast to be dealt with at the same time. For the moment we may be satisfied with the southern portion of the great country, a stretch of land that in itself is far larger than any two European countries put together, if one leave Russia out of the question.

The rise of Southern Brazil is one of the most remarkable features of South America of to-day. It is only in some respects contemporaneous with that of the Spanish-speaking Republics to the south and to the west of its frontiers, for anything approaching its full possibilities has only been realised within

the last dozen years or so. It is true that there has been an element of surprise in the recent progress of all southern South America. But the Brazilian States to the west and south of Rio de Janeiro have provided some additional matter for astonishment, not only in the advance of the various industries that now thrive there, but in the scope of the industries themselves.

Almost from the earliest days of their settlement these regions have always been regarded as peculiarly fruitful in a wide variety of products. Such old-standing industries as those of sugar-planting and the gathering of *Herva Matté* have been associated with the southern states of Brazil from the days of their first colonisation. Right up to the present day neither has shown any signs of failure, although it is true that the latter growth has never exceeded the stage of satisfying comparatively local needs. There is the coffee industry, too, that has been accustomed to send its wares in such tremendous profusion to the port of Santos, and which has found itself in so difficult a position in the course of the war that the unfavourable weather last year which destroyed so many of the trees was viewed with a resignation such as would never have accompanied a catastrophe of the kind, had the available stocks been smaller, and the artificial curtailment of the demand been less pronounced.

A considerable amount of general agriculture, too, with maize as its principal product, has long been included in the main industries of Minas Geraës, São Paulo, Paraná, Santa Catharina, and Rio Grande do Sul, while two recent developments here

are worthy of considerable interest. The first is the cultivation of the wheat belt in the far south, which promises to assist very largely in supplying the Republic with this necessary commodity, although it seems unlikely in the extreme that any serious question of export will ever be involved; the second is the progress of the general fruit industry, which has now coconuts and oranges as its two leading commercial features. Then there is the mineral wealth of the country—the great deposits of iron, a certain amount of gold, and very considerable quantities of diamonds. In respects such as these many districts of Southern Brazil resemble the remote Republic of Bolivia. Not a tenth of their treasures has yet been revealed, and the ground in so many spots is completely virgin so far as the prospector is concerned.

These various developments have all been sufficiently striking after their own fashion. But there is probably not one of them which could not have been foreseen by a really intelligent student of these parts of the Republic. It was in the cattle industry that Southern Brazil has played a long-held (and long unsuspected) trump card. It is true that cattle have existed in the Republic in numbers which gradually grew in importance ever since the day when the first Portuguese *donatarios* took out with them in their small ships livestock and other beasts and seeds with which to furnish the new land. The effect of the climate on these, however, seemed irresistible, and the result was soon evident in a breed which was remarkable rather for horns and hide than for any meat-giving qualities. It is true

that the flesh of these animals was by no mean wasted. It was made to produce *Xarque*, or dried beef, a somewhat rough-and-ready food which did not necessitate a fine breed of animal for its preparation. In the course of time this *Xarque* industry had grown to considerable proportions, seven years ago the State of Rio Grande do Sul having slaughtered almost a million head of cattle in order to export this dried beef to other parts of the Republic.

*Xarque*, nevertheless, was not a product fitted to suit universal requirements, and a few years ago the conditions of the Southern Brazilian pastoral industry began to alter. It was then discovered that the temperate pastures of the far south possessed many of the properties of the Argentine and Uruguayan grazing lands. As a result of this, livestock breeding began to be taken up on an entirely different model. Pedigree cattle were imported, and in 1913 the first meat-chilling enterprise was definitely undertaken. The success of this caused the industry to be established on a rapidly increasing scale, and then the Americans, grasping their opportunity, took the matter in hand, and have already laid more than the foundations of a gigantic enterprise.

In this respect the rise of Southern Brazil has undoubtedly upset many calculations. It was perhaps asking too much, for instance, to expect that the discovery of the pastoral wealth of these regions should have been welcomed with enthusiasm by those interested in the cattle production of the Spanish-speaking Republics in the comparatively near neighbourhood, although in the present state



of the demand for meat any rivalry of the kind might well be accepted with equanimity.

At the same time there is no doubt that the unexpectedness of this new development has come with a certain shock to the older established lands of the first pastoral order. The historical theory in many parts of South America has for centuries run to the effect that it was always part of the Brazilian policy to cast a jealous eye on the rich "Campo" land that stretched itself so temptingly just to the south of the Brazilian frontiers. Whether this was so or not does not matter here. The curious fact has now become evident that all the time—although they knew it not—the Brazilians were in possession of their own pastoral areas, and these were stretches of country capable of producing not only the lean kind, the traditional type of the land, but a breed of animal fit to be slaughtered for its meat, and that was capable of being raised in sufficient quantities to justify in ages to come the foundation of an important meat-packing industry!

The mineral wealth of Southern Brazil is too familiar a topic to the majority to need any lengthy reference here. The mining industry has presented no especially new features of recent years, though the rapidly improving means of transport must soon bring into greater prominence many of the valuable fields of iron which exist in such vast quantities in the states of Minas Geraës, São Paulo, and Rio Grande do Sul. Some idea of this abundance may be obtained from the circumstance that in Minas Geraës alone it has been computed that there exist no less than three thousand million of tons of that

valuable metal of which there is at present so marked a world shortage.

So much for the present-day condition of the main industries of these interesting states. The actual field for enterprise, as it now stands, is, of course, for wider than may be gathered from this cursory examination. For there remain such questions as those of communications and manufactures, the former of world-wide importance, and the latter, although of less general concern, by no means one to be overlooked. To say nothing of Minas Geraës, the pace at which the interior of São Paulo, Paraná, Santa Catharina, and Rio Grande do Sul is being opened up is worthy of note.

One of the first indications of this was the linking up of the port of Santos by a wonderfully engineered railway with the town of São Paulo, which resulted in the remarkable growth of the great coffee port. But the beginnings of the development of the new ports to the south of this again promise to give equally dramatic results. These, naturally, will be largely fed by the meat industry that has already been referred to. The very important railway extensions, too, which are now contemplated in these directions should work further and far-reaching revolutions in the various industries. There is this to be said, moreover, for railway construction in these hilly districts that, although the configuration of the country frequently presents intricate problems to the engineers, the nature of the soil in general is not such as to interfere with the permanent ways when once they have been laid—a fortunate circumstance that is grievously lacking in many other parts of the continent.

As was only to be expected, Southern Brazil has made considerable progress in her manufacturing industries during the course of the war. Her cotton mills have increased in number, and the output of this has grown rapidly. In paper making too some notable progress has been achieved, no less than seven mills adapted for this purpose already existing in the state of Rio de Janeiro, while yet others are under construction. Notwithstanding all this, it is not to be denied that the advance has been made largely from the force of dire necessity, owing to the temporary interruption of supplies from abroad, rather than from any peculiarly advantageous circumstances in the Republic itself. For even the most populous of all these southern districts still suffer from the handicaps involved in this respect from high freights, the necessity of importing plant from long distances, and, most important of all, the lack of skilled labour.

Southern Brazil, as a matter of fact, with her varied products and her great reserves of water power, offers a very favourable future field for manufacture. But it seems certain that the question of population will have to be solved before she will be in a position to offer any really serious competition to the manufacturing nations of older standing, such as Great Britain and the United States.

Questions such as these naturally lead us to the topic of the great cities of these regions of Brazil, and here again we meet with a degree of enterprise that is almost unrivalled throughout the length and breadth of the continent. Both Rio de Janeiro and

São Paulo need more than a mere word in passing; for the influence they exercise on the affairs of the Republic in general is very great.

Rio is in many respects the most amazing city in South America. Until comparatively recently it was celebrated for little beyond its mercantile possibilities, the wonderful natural beauty of its situation, and the periodical outbreaks of yellow fever and other terrible diseases of the kind that were wont to scourge its population—or, rather, for the most part, the foreign elements of this. Now, it may justly be said that Rio, apart from its surroundings, is one of the most striking cities of the world. As a monument to modern Brazilian enterprise, it stands supreme. Its boulevards, avenues, public buildings, and, indeed, almost everything about it, have been constructed completely regardless of cost. The effect of the whole is a very magnificent if somewhat florid city, that is now, humanly speaking, totally freed from the insanitary dangers that once infested it.

Rio, moreover, is spreading in a fashion that is typically South American. Beaches, such as that of Copacabana, that seven or eight years ago were little more than mere stretches of sand, are now fashionable seaside resorts—suburbs with long streets and avenues facing the sea and stretching away inland, the houses of which are to be rented at a cost about double of that in any average English seaside town. But these aspects of Rio have already been referred to at some length in a previous chapter. Let it suffice to say that there are innumerable openings for enterprise in the Brazilian



capital, from the establishment of ordinary agencies and import firms to the opening of those most popular cinema palaces and the foundation of new hotels.

These last, it may be said, are urgently needed. It is true that a considerable advance has been achieved in this direction during the past half-dozen years, but very much more remains to be done. As it is, the existing establishments frequently find it out of the question to accommodate all who wish to enter their doors. There are, I believe, some schemes afoot to improve the situation in this respect; but, unless these mature within a reasonable time, the need for better and more extensive accommodation must become acute.

In connection with this the point must not be overlooked—and it is by no means so insignificant as it may sound—that undoubtedly the wonderful city of Rio de Janeiro is sooner or later destined to become one of the most noted tourist centres in the world. There are not many Brazilians who are inclined to take up the art of hotel-keeping on the modern scale, and it seems certain that the enterprise will have to emanate from abroad. But the average Brazilian would certainly appreciate to the full those arch-comforts which are part and parcel of the quite modern hotel. And that Rio is ripe for almost any enterprise may be gathered from one alone of the later undertakings—the new steel rope-way that bears its cars on their aerial way across a giddy abyss to the top of the Sugarloaf Mountain in order that the passengers may enjoy a panorama that was before inaccessible to them.

It is practically certain that many opportunities such as this will be taken advantage of in the near future. But there is one circumstance which must be borne in mind when considering Rio from the point of view of strictly local enterprises of the kind which include shop establishments as well as the more retail types of imports. It is the belief of many who have not travelled in South America—and in this respect it is not a little curious that there should be still a certain number of people who fail to realize that Portuguese is the language of Brazil—that the methods of life of the Brazilian and the Spanish South American are identical. But this is by no means the case. It is true that both share a common love of motor-cars, jewellery, and other objects of the kind. But the average inhabitant of Rio remains comparatively simple in his tastes. Lacking much of that ostentation that has become characteristic of some of the Spanish-speaking Republics, he is not addicted to casting his money abroad in so lavish a manner. But he is essentially a man of generous temperament, who, at the same time, has a shrewd idea of what he wants, and will allow no monetary considerations to baulk him in this direction.

If there be a city in Southern Brazil which partakes to a more marked extent of the trait of what occasionally approaches prodigality it is that of São Paulo, perhaps the most flourishing of all the towns in these regions. This may be put down to the fact that the rise of the great centre of some of the richest neighbourhoods of South America has been far less gradual than that of the capital of the

Republic, which is one of the oldest historical cities on the Atlantic coast. Indeed, the evidence of wealth is in many respects more marked in São Paulo than in Rio itself, and a sense of keen industrial pride would seem to obtain in the southern city of fine buildings similar to that in Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Rosario, and other centres of that kind.

Turning briefly to the general situation of the Republic, it is a matter of common knowledge that the political and commercial relations between Great Britain and Brazil have always been excellent. In many ways they have been closer than those which have prevailed with the other South American States, since, through its Portuguese inheritance, Brazil has shared with her mother country the post of England's oldest ally—a circumstance that was historically made clear when the Court of Portugal, escorted by the British fleet, moved to Rio de Janeiro at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This alliance, of course, has been more firmly cemented than ever before by the action of Brazil in the recent struggle, when she threw in her lot with the Allies in a consistent and admirable manner.

The relations between the two countries, therefore, have seldom been as cordial as they are at the present time. The moment, indeed, affords a peculiarly favourable opportunity not only for a resumption of those full commercial dealings which were interfered with to no small extent in the course of the war, but for a considerable increase in the previous volume of trade. A feature, too, which should favourably influence the new developments

is the comparative immunity from strikes and labour troubles which Brazil has up to the present enjoyed.

Undoubtedly the most formidable trade competition which Great Britain has now to face in Brazil is that of the United States. The Americans have not delayed in making the most of their opportunities at this juncture, and they have been flocking to the South in very imposing numbers during the last three years.

“At the present moment,” said a former President of the United States Chamber of Commerce, “when North America finds herself for the first time in the position of a creditor nation, having formerly always played the part of a debtor, it is plain that her greatest investment of capital should be in South America. We have already invested considerable sums in Central America with exceedingly advantageous results. We have also contributed to a certain degree to the development of countries more to the south, but now when these countries offer us broader fields for exploration we should be very blind if we did not see what a splendid opportunity lies before us.”

This policy is now in full swing, and its development is taking place on much the same lines as in Argentina, with, of course, the interest in the mineral fields added. At the same time it must be said that Great Britain's relations with Brazil are still far more intimate than those of the northern Republic, and there is no reason, from the South American point of view, why she should not share these opportunities to the full. There is room not only for a full measure of both British and American



enterprise, but for a great expansion of British trade, provided only that the men and materials are at hand.

Up to the present time the occupations of the British in Brazil have been to a large extent confined to purely commercial pursuits. It is true that a great deal of active and direct interest has been taken in the working of the numerous mines, but those staple industries, such as coffee-planting, tobacco-growing, sub-tropical agriculture in general, and the rubber-gathering industry of the Amazon basin, do not seem to have attracted any notable amount of personal participation on the part of the British, although, of course, their financial interests in all these branches of industry are very important.

Opportunities in the way of farming and stock-breeding, such as have attracted such large numbers of young Englishmen to the River Plate, have, of course, been absent in Brazil, but with the amazingly rapid opening up of the southern districts for these purposes there is every prospect of a new development in this respect, and there seems no reason why land should not now be taken up on a really important scale in these new regions of very considerable promise. If this should prove to be the case—and it is difficult to see what else is likely to occur at a period in which such opportunities are comparatively fleeting, and are thus keenly sought after—there is every likelihood of the circumstances of the River Plate being repeated more or less in their entirety in the new lands which now offer themselves.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE PRESENT SITUATION OF THE ARGENTINE RAILWAYS

AN enterprise in which the British public is peculiarly interested is that of South American railways in general, and Argentine lines in particular. This is natural enough, since the welfare, or the reverse of these undertakings, concerns innumerable households throughout England in a very direct financial fashion. This work has now celebrated its diamond jubilee, since it was inaugurated in 1857. The start was a modest one, and at this period no more than six miles of track had pushed their tentative way out from Buenos Aires into the astonished *Campo* to the west. Once started, however, the venture very soon made headway, and the Argentine Government, convinced by practical experience of the benefits that were being brought to the country by the new form of transport, gave every encouragement to the pioneers of the railway world in the Republic, and assisted these much-needed ventures by special grants of land and other privileges of the kind.

The result has been so continuous a spread of the railway lines that there is scarcely a province throughout the entire country that has not an efficient service of its own. Buenos Aires, naturally, stands

as the central point from which the various ramifications branch out, most thickly of all to the west, north, and to the south, where the port of Bahia Blanca rests as the limit in this direction of the denser network of the metals. Even in the far south, however, the somewhat desolate land of considerable financial opportunities that until comparatively recently has been associated in the public mind with little beyond the Patagonian giants of tradition (it is a fact, for all that, that the Indians remaining here are of quite unusually large stature), the rails have begun to thread their way among the rough pastures where the sheep now thrive.

At the other extremity of the Republic, moreover, the fastnesses of the sweltering Chaco forests, which until a dozen years or so ago remained far more mysterious even than Patagonia, have for some time now begun to resound to the whistle of the railway engine, with the result that the last untamed Indians in the Republic have finally been stirred from their lairs, and, instead of shooting barbed, wooden-pointed arrows at the stranger, have taken to emerge from their leafy refuges and occasionally to join in the work of harvesting in the more populous adjoining lands.

The extent of this railway enterprise in Argentina will be evident when it is explained that the British companies which have devoted themselves to this purpose own no less than, roughly, twenty-five thousand kilometres of lines. This represents about three times as much as all the remaining lines in the Republic, of which latter systems about half are

controlled by the Argentines, and the other half by French companies. It is clear, therefore, that there can be little cause for complaint in the amount of energy that has been shown. But, as things are at the present moment, this represents only one side of the question.

Unfortunately for the time being the economic situation of these British companies cannot be termed in the least satisfactory. Clearly the reason for this does not lie with the workings of the railways themselves, nor with any disadvantageous circumstances directly connected with the situation and prospects of the various industrial and commercial fields they serve. Indeed, every year the practical utility of the enterprise becomes more clear. At the very least, the British railway companies are doing work to-day which is as fine as anything they have ever achieved in the past, and they are provided with staffs that continue equally efficient.

As a matter of fact, the troubles of these weighty organisations are very little concerned with the direct and technical problems of the carriage of passengers and goods. They arise from circumstances over which the companies themselves have regrettably little control. There are undoubtedly certain elements in the Republic which of late have grown hostile towards the idea of foreign enterprises of the kind. It is not altogether a question of national dignity that seems to be involved, but one of alleged injustices which, according to them, divide the interests of the public from those of the railway companies.



Nothing, of course, is easier in circumstances such as these than to make a stirring appeal to popular sentiment. Thus the attitude of the dissatisfied sections of the community has been expressed by demands such as: "Why should the transport of the country be conducted in such a way as to create a profit which goes to fill the pockets of investors abroad? Why, in order to bring about this state of affairs, should fares and freights be raised to a pitch that entails hardships upon the people of the land the lines were built to serve? Moreover, why should the rank and file of the workers on these lines not be paid for their labour on a more generous scale, even if the stout dividends which go to swell the pockets of the foreign capitalist be a little reduced from the process?"

Popular cries of this kind can scarcely fail in their effect. If put with sufficient enthusiasm, they go straight to the heart of the masses, to which the road of the purse is as short a cut as in the case of every other section of the human race. It is not surprising, therefore, that a certain feeling of injustice should have been aroused—notwithstanding the fact that its fount is an agitation which has been born from, to say the least of it, a complete misapprehension.

It is true that the railways in question are conducted on commercial lines, and that the investors abroad obtain a certain return for their money. Whether this amount has been excessive or not may be judged from the fact that during the past five years the average net return of the British railway companies in Argentina has been three and a half

per cent. Surely in no country could this scale of profit distribution be considered excessive. But in this instance the inadequacy is peculiarly marked. For Argentina is a land that is wont to return exceptionally high rates of interest for the investment of capital. A rate of seven or eight per cent. for safe mortgages on landed property will not cause the mortgagee to raise his eyebrows, or the mortgager to smile with any undue satisfaction, almost anywhere throughout the rich alluvial tracts of the Rio de la Plata. And yet, in the face of efficient and able working, and of a situation to which the presence and increase of the permanent ways are becoming more and more indispensable, the dividends of these British railway companies have been, by a series of unnatural disadvantages, kept to an average of three and a half per cent.

As it is, the investors can scarcely regard the investment as a profitable one, nor one which has received the ordinary measure of common justice, more especially when it is considered that it is these railways that stand as the keystones of the prosperity of the Republic. Were the difficulties under which the companies now labour rendered yet more acute, it is clear that the situation would end by becoming impossible from the economic point of view, and, after all, it is unlikely that a development of this kind would suit the convenience of the Argentine public any more than that of the British investors.

The majority of the most prominent and intelligent of the Argentines are fully alive to these facts. A number of them indeed have shown con-

siderable energy in their attempts to combat the delusion which have been foisted with such irresponsible enthusiasm upon the credulous sections of the community. But the cry is undoubtedly a popular one, and its reiteration has had the unfortunate result of tempting a harassed Government into shelving its responsibilities towards labour on to the railways, which thus are, in a sense, made to play the unenviable rôle of whipping boys.

As regards the complaints against the alleged undue privileges afforded to foreign capital, the shallowness of the ground for these may be very simply tested. After all, the railway stock markets are open to all the world, and, of course, to the Argentines among the rest. If the financial situation of the railways be so favourable to the companies and so adverse to the public they serve, there is a very manifest remedy to their hand. The Argentines have merely to purchase as many of the railway shares as they desire, and thus partake in the supposed benefits. But have they ever done this? I think the railway share lists will speak very clearly on this point, both as to dealings in the past and at the present moment.

Again, is this omission on the part of the Argentines themselves due to any reluctance to share in the rich profits that are supposed in some mysterious manner to flow in a steady stream from the flourishing Republic to the coffers in London? If any objection of the kind exists I have never noticed it in Argentina, any more than anywhere else. The reason is merely that the Argentines make more money out of their own affairs at home, and naturally

prefer the seven or eight per cent. which their investments enable them to secure—owing to the presence of the railway lines, which themselves yield a return of scarcely half of this !

As hard luck will have it, too, it is the railways that have borne the brunt of the inconveniences that the war has imposed on Argentina, sufficiently light though these are in the main. By far the most important of these was the shortage of the supply of coal from abroad, to say nothing of the high prices which prevailed for such limited quantities of the fuel as were available. This, it goes without saying, fell as a particular hardship on the railways, which, in the main, were obliged to burn timber brought very long distances from the northern territories of the Republic, and which in some cases were even forced to resort to maize cobs as fuel. This, however, was a mere passing phase, which, unfortunately, will not necessarily prove the case with the labour troubles.

Labour has now become one of the problems of these South American Republics, just as it has almost everywhere else in the world. The strikes in Argentina and Uruguay have assumed a very fierce character. So far as the railways are concerned, few of the more important struggles have been devoid of bloodshed. Passenger trains have been wilfully derailed by the strikers, and on more than one occasion passing coaches have been heavily fired on by malcontents at certain points of the line, the passengers on more than one occasion having used their firearms in retaliation from the windows.



The disturbances, as a matter of fact, have been by no means confined to railway affairs. Even in the hotel world of Buenos Aires the disputes between the employers and employed have been carried to great lengths. Thus only a few months ago the guests at the chief establishment of the kind in the Argentine capital found themselves quite suddenly deprived of the services of its staff, while strong pickets took up their guard outside. Aided by the indefatigable manager, they waited upon themselves in the kitchens, and doubtless were little the worse. But the affair had its tragic side; for a loyalist servant who was pluckily bearing back a supply of milk to the beleaguered hotel garrison was shot just as he gained the threshold.

As may be imagined, the human element of these South American strikes differs very greatly from that to which we are accustomed at home. In the great centres of the south-east of the Latin continent there is nothing which yet approaches what might be termed a standard class of worker. The artizans and labourers here are made up of a heterogeneous and cosmopolitan mass. They hail, for the most part, not only from Spain, Italy, and the Levant, but from half a dozen other quarters of Europe, to say nothing of near Asia, as well. The great majority possess but the scantiest rudiments of education, and a large proportion are quite illiterate.

Many, too, have sailed out from lands where the standard of wages is so far beneath that which prevails in Argentina—although this itself is not abnormally high—that their sense of proportion is liable to become confused from this fact alone, and

they are apt to believe that one advance in the scale of pay should succeed another as automatically as the flowers bloom in spring. For the most part credulous and very ingenuous, they are very much at the mercy of those among them whose energy and educational advances fit them to become leaders.

From the very constitution of their human elements it may be imagined that there are not a few firebrands to be found among their number. The southern Italian and the Spaniard from Barcelona does not feel inclined to drop the sense of his wrongs on his mere translation from one soil to another with no more ado than that with which the Iberian peasant of the remoter districts flings aside the more picturesque features of his costume on landing in the southern New World. Many of them have become accustomed to serve as agitators in the land of their birth, in circumstances, no doubt, which frequently justified their discontent to the full. And this habit, once acquired, is no more easy to shake off than a taste for strong waters.

There is thus a considerable amount of inflammatory material always at hand in those large industrial centres of the Rio de la Plata which have received the most notable streams of immigration. In the past the Argentine Government has always manifested a very firm attitude in dealing with any attempts at actual excesses, and the instigators have from time to time received uncommonly short shrift. The later policy of hesitation would seem to have accentuated every disturbance of the kind, for, as I have already pointed out, these labouring groups of the southern Republics lack so far that educa-

tional power and sense of logic which at least are the characteristics of so many of the British labour leaders of to-day, and which have the effect of rendering their claims so much stronger.

In dealing with matters of unrest the Argentines—and, for the matter of that, the South Americans in general—have a sufficiently apt retort when taxed with failing to cope with a situation of the kind. This was brought home to me on the occasion of my last visit in a somewhat disconcerting manner. In the course of a talk with an ex-Minister for Foreign Affairs the conversation turned on the subject of the recrudescence of revolutions in a minor Republic. The ex-Minister agreed that the condition of affairs was lamentable.

“The fact is,” he said with a dry smile, “they are becoming quite European in their ideas.”

A few remarks of this kind are apt to make the would-be mentor chary of distributing his views in too broadcast and generous a fashion. There seem to be so few suitable replies at the moment—or even later! Acting on this hint, it would indeed be unreasonable to single out Argentina as an example of what should not be in matters such as these, when, after all, the ideas which have led to the present condition of affairs have, strictly speaking, no local origin at all, but, on the contrary, have been derived from Europe. This, however, affords comparatively small consolation to those directly interested in the welfare of the hampered enterprises.

Quite recently the troubles of the British-owned railway companies have been shared by the steamship lines. In this case the chief unfavourable

element has again been strikes, and the inconvenience that was caused by this towards the end of the war has become accentuated since. The steamship companies, of course, are in a far stronger position as regards the difficulty than are the railway companies; for, whereas a permanent way must be as good as its name for the welfare of the shareholders, a liner's keel has no such geographical limitations, and may float anywhere it likes at the will of its owners.

Here again the British interests feel aggrieved at the want of support accorded them by the official representatives of Argentina, and it cannot be said that the complaints are without foundation. The matter, however, is one which is likely to be settled far more rapidly than that of the railways, since were there no other solution it is clear that the port of Montevideo must benefit to such an extent from the increased tonnage which would visit its harbour as to affect not a little the welfare of Buenos Aires. Indeed, this theory has actually been proved by practice to a certain extent, with the result of a temporary adjustment which no doubt came about more speedily than would otherwise have been the case.

Here again, too, the differences lie between the British concerns and the heads of the Argentine departments responsible for the state of affairs rather than with the population at large, and as regards the latter it may safely be said that no ill blood has been engendered by the points at issue—if, naturally, the views of some of the more reckless of the strike leaders be left out of consideration.



It should not be considered, I think, that this policy of the Argentine Government, which is so unfavourable to the British interests concerned, is one of voluntary and premeditated pin-pricks. There is no doubt that the Argentine authorities are faced with considerable difficulties. Having won its way to power by the proclamation of a sweeping and popular programme, the Government now finds itself chained to the chariot wheels of its promises, and there are large sections of the community who are making the most strenuous endeavours that the pace of the chariot shall not be slackened.

The heads of the State have thus frequently of late found themselves in the dilemma of choosing between the demands of the labour party—the members of which, as I have said, have not the advantages of the education that is now possessed by the corresponding groups in Great Britain—and the claims of the foreign-owned companies. In such a case, to which no parallel exists in this country, there is a strong temptation to side with the more numerous and more violent party. It is far easier to give out a simple negative on paper, or in the Senate or Congress House, than to face several tens of thousands of truculent strikers. We ourselves can obtain some faint appreciation of this attitude when we observe the skyward soaring of the income-tax on those of the slenderest yearly income, while the onus has been made to slide gracefully and generously past those artisans who may be earning double the income. Woe to him who has not within his organisation the respectable power of a kick! The vultures may settle upon the back of a sheep—but never upon the hind leg of a mule!

Not that this latter allegory need be applied in any way to the case of the British companies established in Argentina. None have shown themselves gifted with a greater degree of initiative and enterprise, and, as to their work, it speaks most eloquently for itself throughout the length and breadth of the land. But it is difficult to go in and make runs—either at cricket or in railway trains—when there is an umpire at each wicket over-anxious to gratify the fieldsmen. In any case it is difficult to believe that the phase is anything but a passing one, and that the good sense and natural friendship of the Argentine people in general will not assist in overcoming the difficulty.

The question is a sufficiently important one; for it is concerned not only with justice in the abstract—no mean consideration in itself—but with some three hundred millions of British capital. And this is a sum not to be sneezed at even in these days, when the man in the street has fallen into the habit of discussing an odd million or two with the same glib indifference with which a dozen years ago he would have referred to the same number of half-crowns !

## CHAPTER XVII

### SOME REFLECTIONS ON BRITISH TRADE WITH SOUTH AMERICA

PERHAPS one of the greatest surprises afforded by the world war has been the fillip that the struggle has given to the productive power of nations. It is true, of course, that the greater part of these products have been swallowed up in the militant furnace which they were designed to feed. Nevertheless, the result has been an international competition of manufactures that has been conducted on a more strenuous and speedy scale than has ever been the case since the dwellers of the Stone Age first took to chipping arrow heads out of flint.

From this arises the strange circumstance—which, I suppose, admits of no controversy, that the productive power of the world is to-day, notwithstanding the exhaustive effects of the conflict, greater than it was at the beginning of the year 1914, and that nothing but the temporary disorganisation of trade prevents this from becoming apparent. There is no space here in which to enter into the intricate problems of capital and labour. But it must surely be taken for granted that the common sense of the nation will see to it that there is no undue delay in effecting some definite settlement as permanent as any adjustment of the kind can ever be.

Were there no prospect of this these pages might as well not be written—which would be a very small loss—for practically no commerce would be left in existence—which would be a very great one. So we may surely proceed on the supposition (without which the future would be utterly black, and, indeed, impossible) that the industrial affairs of the nation will rapidly become normal, in the sense, that is to say, of making allowance for the demands of the new conditions of humanity. This granted, it follows that trade will continue to be conducted on principles similar to those which have governed it up to now, and that the future must still be judged to a certain extent by the past.

There would seem for a very long time now to have been two schools of thought concerning the most suitable methods of carrying on British trade with South America. The one has been given to urge that methods should be adopted to bring about an increase all along the line. The other has maintained with considerable sturdiness that to add to the volume of the quite profitable trade which was already in being, and to bring about the developments necessary to branch out into new directions would be only effected at such expense as to lower in an undue proportion the scale of profit on the whole.

No doubt there is a certain amount to be said for both sides. The sympathies of the author, for what they are worth, have always inclined towards the former. It must be admitted that some sufficiently complicated considerations enter into the matter; but the entire subject seems to rest on a fairly simple basis. Do the circumstances of the



commercial world justify a nation or a person in being satisfied with what it, or he, already possesses in the way of trade ?

There is surely no need to drag masses and columns of statistics into the argument. These might well be used with telling effect either way. It seems to me that the struggle of practical commerce closely resembles the battle of the trees in a virgin forest. The fate of the original trunks, however sturdy and splendid their wood, is sealed sooner or later—sometimes very much later—unless they fling out fresh shoots and branches to maintain their places in the upper air, the benefits of which would otherwise be shut off from them by their more enterprising rivals. The end of one of these who lags behind in this ceaseless race is always the same, a rotting substance smothered in parasites and creepers.

The comparison may be drastic. But I am convinced that it is accurate enough. This principle, at all events, has been put into practice by every private commercial firm of old-standing which survives and retains its ancient glories to-day. On the face of it it is clear that to retain merely the most directly profitable branches of trade ensures a larger proportion of profit than to enter into a wider and perhaps more arduous field. But, having regard to the fierce elements of the competition of to-day, is it likely that this policy, however desirable, would meet with permanent success ? Does not the history of commonplace and everyday trade show that its most remunerative ramifications must suffer in the long run, if they be unsupported by others, from the gnawing effects of a more general competition which,

having obtained entire control of the neighbouring fields of industry, is in a position to employ them as favourable bases for an attack upon the most desirable strongholds of all ?

There is no doubt, on the other hand, that this theory can be carried too far, and that to attempt to become unduly diffuse in the matter of production would produce as mischievous an effect as any which might be brought about by over-specialisation or centralisation. At the present moment, as a matter of fact, when the demands for almost every commodity so greatly exceed the supplies, this particular problem is of less immediate importance than it has been in the past, or, presumably, will be in the future.

So far as the subject of this chapter is concerned, there are two entirely different views of British commerce. One of these prevails throughout South America, the other in Great Britain. The former has the advantage of being based on an intimate insight of what is occurring on the spot. The latter gains from the wider experience of Britain's trade, not only with the southern continent, but with the entire world. Possibly, those in South America fail to take into consideration the full demands of this latter when they urge their claims. Indeed, it is almost unfortunate in this respect that the commercial power of England is regarded almost throughout South America as illimitable, and that the absence of a quite ubiquitous effort is apt to put down to a want of will rather than to a lack of capacity.

In the past there does not seem any doubt that many of the charges concerning ultra-conservatism in the British commercial methods have been sorely

justified. But the grounds for these, fortunately, would seem to have greatly diminished. Moreover, there might have been more serious charges to meet. It is surely better to produce a good article than to display a specious brilliance in the sale of a bad one! Regarded in this light, the reproach might even be regarded as an excellent advertisement for quality! After all, that form of trade which consists largely of an inferior imitation of the goods of others may persist for a time, but the history of commerce has shown that it can have no real permanency.

Perhaps it is fortunate for himself and for the trade of his country that the British manufacturer has been able to go upon his way unperturbed. He has suffered on occasions from this wholesale imitation of his goods. But he has taken the matter philosophically, and has let nothing interfere with his conviction that the goods he makes should be the best of their kind.

On such subjects as these the British manufacturer has shown a strange tendency to remain silent—almost too silent—in South America as elsewhere. He has continued to manufacture in a very quiet and resolute fashion, attempting no propaganda, and abstaining from decrying his rivals' goods. He left it to the buyer to judge. He may have missed business on some occasions, but he has retained his reputation both for his own honesty and for the quality of his goods. Which is the chief thing to be desired, after all.

Nevertheless, the force of organised propaganda and advertisement is not to be underrated, and it

is probable that the power of this has never been understood in England, at least as regards its international commercial aspects. It is not to be denied, of course, that it may be used for evil as well as for good. It may be employed not only to foster national industries, but also to conceal national aims. Thus, before the war, there were many people in South America, as elsewhere, who were convinced of the supreme excellence of the German commercial methods. They had been told this so often by the Germans themselves that in the end they took to believing it—just as so many others drank in little by little the ceaseless fountain of organised opinion concerning German ideals and politics.

But, although it was not realised at the time, it is now clear that the German policy before the war was not sound. On the contrary, it was completely reckless. It was typical of the modern mind of a nation which once bred Schiller and his compeers, and now sends a Luxburg to South America !

In fact, the recent German commercial policy resembled in many respects the rush of the German armies on Paris in 1914, and the desperate endeavour of the great offensive in the spring of 1918. Unless the success of such hazards proved complete and overwhelming within a certain period it followed that an utter disaster and crash must ensue. German commerce, in fact, contained many of the elements of the aggressive military programme of that Empire. It relied on nothing less than the complete destruction of its rivals before it could reap the actual benefit of its efforts.

It is needless to say that not even the most



enterprising German merchants and great industrial companies could have attempted this unaided. The officials in Berlin, who had been the first to inspire the move, were not long in realising this. It was then that they brought the system of State subsidies to a pitch never before known. Experience showed them, too, that, in order to bring the full force of these subsidies to bear, it was necessary to eliminate as much as possible competition between the various German merchants and industrial concerns. It was for this reason that the State encouragement included the formation of large mercantile combinations that should make common cause against every person or firm that was not of their nationality. The natural result of this was to bring into being a number of trusts, that worked at the orders of the German Government, and obediently followed its astute directions.

The influence of the Prussian rule being now defunct, it does not seem probable that anything of precisely the same nature will occur again. But whether the German merchants and manufacturers have abandoned all hope of a prospect that was so alluring to them is quite another matter. After all, the aims of these particular trusts, when engineered with such motives, are only too clear. The seductive concessions, the startlingly low prices that are thrown in from time to time as a bait, and all the other inducements of the kind—these are not brought into play for nothing. They are merely some of the practices of those who are attempting to get entire control of a market, and to drive their competitors from the field, whether by fair means or foul. It is the consumer who pays in the end,

and it is from the consumer that the successful trust exacts the price of its success.

Now, supposing that the Germans had been successful in their trade war in South America ! We know the cruel indemnity extorted from ruined and starving Russia. Would the Germans have been any more merciful in matters of industry after a commercial victory in the flourishing and wealthy Republics of South America ? If so, they would have gone completely against their own rigidly observed doctrines !

There is no doubt that in this respect the world has escaped a danger second only in magnitude to the military peril. It is as much the duty of the commercial world to take precautions against its recurrence, as it is the duty of statesmen and soldiers to guard against the return of the great military threat from which the entire world has suffered.

From the point of view of mere everyday industries, has it occurred to anyone to enquire what would have occurred in South America had the military positions of England and Germany been reversed during the war ? Let us suppose, that is to say, that the British had found themselves in the predicament that confronted the Germans towards the end of the struggle, when their trade in the majority of the Latin American Republics was almost completely stopped, and their industries suffered from the impossibility of carrying them on. This affords an interesting test of the respective services rendered to South America by the two nations.

The result of the cessation of German trade was, of course, actually made evident in the continent. Not even the most ardent pro-German can assert

that the effects of this were startling. Life in the various Republics went on very much as usual. It is true that steamers arrived at far longer intervals than in the times of peace—thanks to the piracy of the German submarines—and that the want of fuel in many districts interfered with the normal running of the railways. But the reason for the latter inconvenience was the same as the first, and in any case neither the fuel nor the majority of the steamers came from Germany. Thus the greatest deprivations suffered by the South Americans arose not from the fact that German trade had been stopped, but because a section of British industry had been interfered with.

On the other hand, it may safely be said that, during those crucial years, no South American went without the necessities of life, and in many cases the circumstances of the war proved of actual financial benefit. It is surely not an exaggeration to say that there was scarcely an article of German manufacture that was seriously missed. But what if the industries of the British had been stopped in the same way? It is here that we get a striking instance of the difference between a direct species of partnership between two nations and a condition of affairs which involves mere sales and nothing beyond.

It will at once be seen that the possibilities involved would have been far-reaching. What if the British-owned railways in South America had ceased to run under German pressure—and we know that in the case of their victory this would have been exercised to the utmost! Let us suppose that the Germans, as they tried so hard to do, had succeeded

in completely stopping the supplies of British coal, in cutting the submarine cables connecting the two worlds, in sinking the British-owned river steamers, and in putting an end to the British institutions and societies that may now claim to have become part and parcel of South American life. Surely there would have been felt a difference—a difference that must have contrasted strangely with the almost normal conditions which actually prevailed !

It is not necessary to put this forward in the light of a glorification of the British race. Nor must it be taken as a claim for any species of gratitude. Far from it. The matter merely concerns the differing manner in which the services of England and Germany have been rendered. Each has acted in accordance with its national policy. Germany has sold a quantity of cheap goods, and has taken dollars in exchange. There is no reason for complaint in that. But there the matter ends. No trace remains of Germany's interest,—except what remains of the cheap goods.

Great Britain has done more than that. She, an old and tried associate, has entered into the national life and the national tasks of the South Americans. She need not pose as a benefactor because of that. It has paid her well enough to do so. But the fact remains that she has given more than commercial travellers, and has not considered her interest at an end when some particular sale has been effected. Germany took her responsibilities of association far more lightly. She made her money, and there is the conclusion of all things, so far as she is concerned.

From the point of view of ethical justice, therefore, it is only right that the British industry, which



was designed merely for peace, should survive that of the Germans, which was intended to serve principally for the purposes of war. The fact is equally striking that in the course of the actual struggle the productive efforts of the aggressors were outdone in even their proudest features. Even in the most vital trade of the Central Empires, the highly specialised production of war material, no more than a couple of years were fated to elapse before Great Britain showed a definite lead in quality, ingenuity, and inventive power.

It is an accepted axiom that there is no sentiment in business. The truth of this has been proved by countless millions of merchants, although the rule is by no means without its exceptions. In any case it is scarcely reasonable to expect a commercial man to continue to deal with a friendly firm that demanded higher rates than any other. In such a case, indeed, the real friendship of the selling firm would be very much open to question !

Nevertheless, there are many instances where friendship and business go hand in hand. Nowhere has this been more evident than in the history of the commerce of South America. Since the days when the first British consignments of goods sailed to the then new and untried Republics of the South, the commercial transactions between Britain and the Latin American world have always been more or less bound up with both political and personal sentiment.

This is not to be wondered at, when it is remembered that the first consignments from England to the Latin Americans themselves, both of the north and the south of the continent, actually occurred previous to the definite establishment of the Inde-

pendence. They consisted not only of war material for those who at the time were termed rebels, but of British troops as well, who had embarked to assist in the fight for the cause of freedom. So, without any fear of exaggeration, it may be said that the opening of British commerce with South America was far more closely associated with sentiment than with the mere exchange of cash, since at that strenuous and completely uncertain period all pecuniary considerations had of necessity to take second place.

In the earlier days of the Independence and of the trade which followed the victory of the South American arms, it was inevitable that the average British merchant should have shown no little ignorance concerning the needs of the Latin continent. Such few South Americans as had visited England in the days when the final shreds of Spanish power were still clinging to their continent, such as Miranda, Bolivar, San Martin, and the rest of the heroes of the War of Liberation, were naturally far more deeply interested in war and politics than in the affairs of a commerce, the real possibilities of which were only just beginning to dawn upon the minds of the most enterprising. And with the first visits of the British merchants the commerce between Great Britain and the southern Republics rapidly swelled to important proportions.

Then followed the era of the railways and of the other great South American industries in which England worked hand in hand with the dwellers in the South—it may assuredly be said to the profit of both peoples. By that time the fame of British methods had permeated the continent, and the rectitude of the *palabra Inglesa* had long become

proverbial. It is popularly supposed that at that period the British merchant was almost without competition in his dealings from Panama to Bahia Blanca; but this is by no means the case. The records of the mid-nineteenth century show that many other European nations were concerned to an important degree, and that even in those days the merchant community in South America was very cosmopolitan.

What is the reason, then, that the British merchants have continued to hold so large a share of the business of the Latin American continent? Their methods have stood the test of over a century. Had they failed, British commerce must undoubtedly been cast aside. There has been no question of mere sentiment involved; the interests have been too gigantic for that. It has been one of those cases where sentiment and business have gone together. The methods and aims of the British merchant are not those of a man who desires to be here to-day and gone to-morrow. His policy has always been that of a prolonged association and friendship. And to achieve this he must continue to satisfy. Surely it cannot be denied that this is a sound basis upon which to conduct business!

Now it is abundantly clear that the British Commercial community has at least been free from any such taint as that which has tinged the practices of its former chief rival. It may fairly be said that from the very start it has been entirely free from any suspicion of intrigue. Such money as the British made went towards the manufacture of other goods. It was not employed to stifle the efforts of rival traders, but to enable the British manufacturer to live and to continue his business.

It is in this respect that the South Americans, speaking generally, and the British have so much in common. However high-spirited may be their attitude, the element of pure militarism does not enter in the least into the composition of either race. In the minds of both, industry and commerce suffice for their own ends, and are not wont to be employed for the furtherance of politics and intrigue.

Moreover, regarded entirely without sentiment, what is the best guarantee of good faith in the dealings between two groups of commercial men? Surely a deposit on the part of the one to the other—a deposit of cash or goods. This is where the South Americans can scarcely fail to gain an advantage in dealing with the British. For these have put down their deposit in South America. It consists of nothing less than those vast sums expended on railway lines, shipping, port-works, land, industrial and municipal enterprises, and all the other gigantic investments which they have freely undertaken, and of which they have accepted the rough side as well as the smooth.

This in itself affords a very weighty assurance—were one needed—of good faith. But it represents more than that. It involves a common material interest in addition to the traditional friendship that binds the two races. South America is a matter of primary interest to the British. When evil days light upon the continent, the important British community concerned suffers. When the continent prospers, British interests prosper too. And it must not be forgotten that the affairs of Great Britain exercise a similar influence on South America—a circumstance that completes the situation.



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